AWK! COMICS
WALTER KILLZY
NO. 15
$ 2.95
THE HOLLOW EARTH
PART ELEVEN
M. SHAW '94
© 1994 by Mark Shaw

WHAT IS THIS...?

WELCOME... to **WALTER KITTY** No. 15-- and Part Eleven of **THE HOLLOW EARTH**-- of which Part Twelve, next issue, will be the final chapter!

After all these years, it's hard for me to believe that it's almost finished. I have mixed feelings about it, as I've grown very fond of the characters, and will certainly miss chronicling their underground adventures --but at the same time, it will be a relief to wrap up this story and move on to... heh, heh... other things...

Other things like new Walter Kitty stories-- **shorter** ones!

But I'm getting ahead of myself-- 'cause I still have to **illustrate** that last chapter of **THE HOLLOW EARTH** first-- and it's a giant 57 page (at present) extravaganza, that (I hope) will satisfactorily wrap up this massive project, and resolve all its conflicts and questions.

THIS chapter-- the one you are now holding in your trembling hands contains 44 pages of story--
CATHERINE and **ZANOMANON** battle for the mastery of **THE SOURCE**-- with the fate of the world depending on who triumphs--
DR. FOXX undertakes a **dangerous mission**-- and an **old friend** turns up to answer a few questions--
DENNIS attempts to influence events by manipulating a few people...
And **WALTER...** Well, Walter is mostly just standing around looking terrified! Given the circumstances, though, you can't really **blame** him.

So buckle up your safety ropes and hang on, spelunkers--

The **climax** begins here...

Your creaky pal,

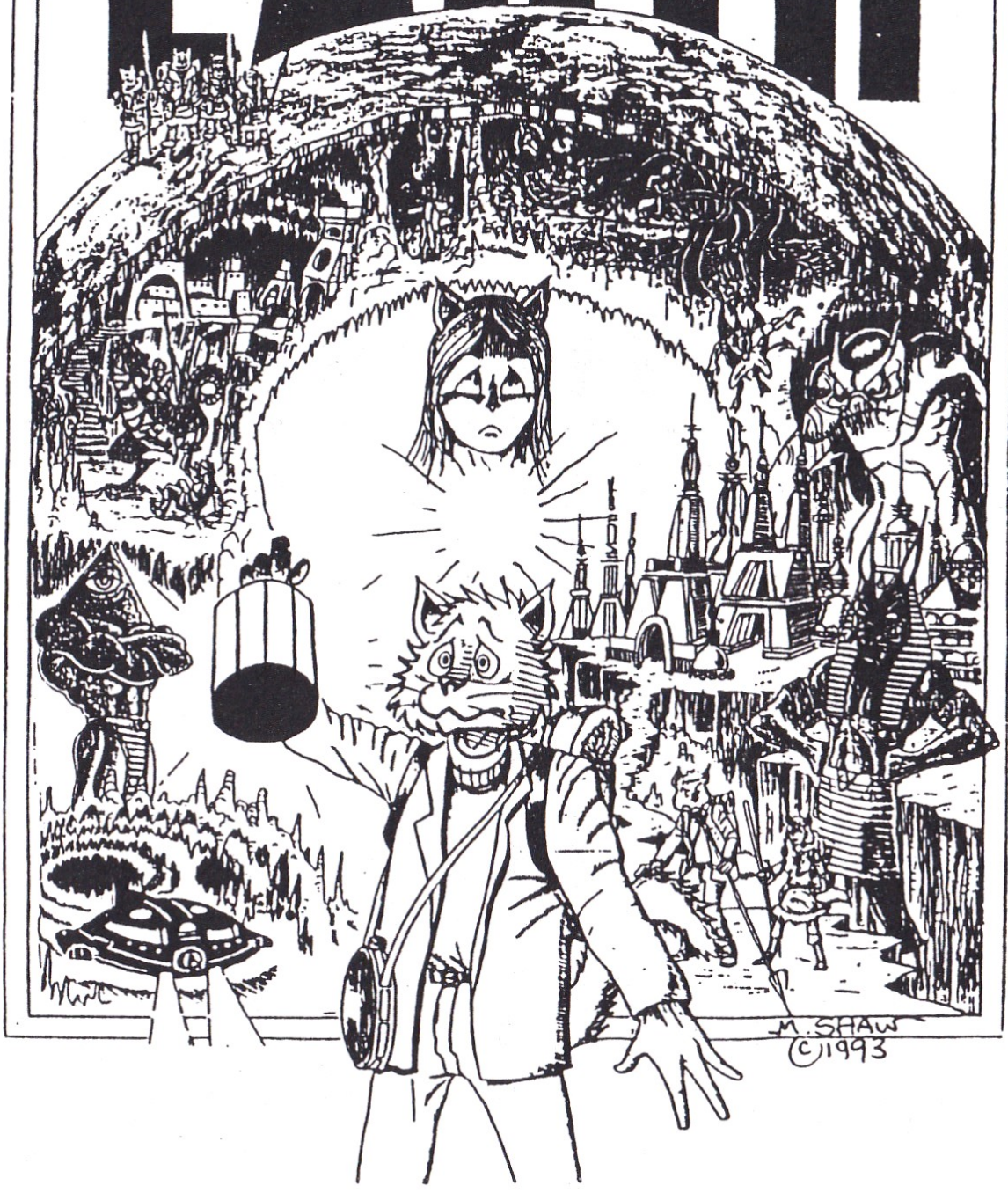
"UNCLE"

MARK

Walter Kitty

in

THE HOLLOW EARTH



WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE

WALTER KITTY, with the help of his one-eyed, all-seeing friend **DENNIS**, has rescued **CATHERINE FOXX** from the clutches of the evil **ZANOMANON**-- who had intended to **steal her soul** and **use** its unique and peculiar qualities to power his diabolical **machine**, enabling him to control **THE SOURCE**-- an awesome entity that wields the power of **creation** and **destruction**-- and which only **CATHERINE** or her **MOTHER** can summon into being.

Furious at being bested by a mere mortal, **ZANOMANON** impulsively utilizes a dangerous experimental conveyance device to beat **WALTER** and his friends to **AGHARTA**, the city at the center of the earth, where he confronts **CATHERINE'S FATHER, DR. ROBERT FOXX**, and her **MOTHER, MARIANA**, who has been **injured** in her clash with the **evil side** of **THE SOURCE.**

ZANOMANON steals MARIANA'S soul, and leaves **DR. FOXX alive** to mourn her.

Afterward, **WALTER**, and **CATHERINE** are reunited with **DR. FOXX**-- just as thousands of **deadly ships** converge on the battered city-- it is **ZANOMANON'S boot army**-- and they have been given orders to **kill every living being** in **AGHARTA** !

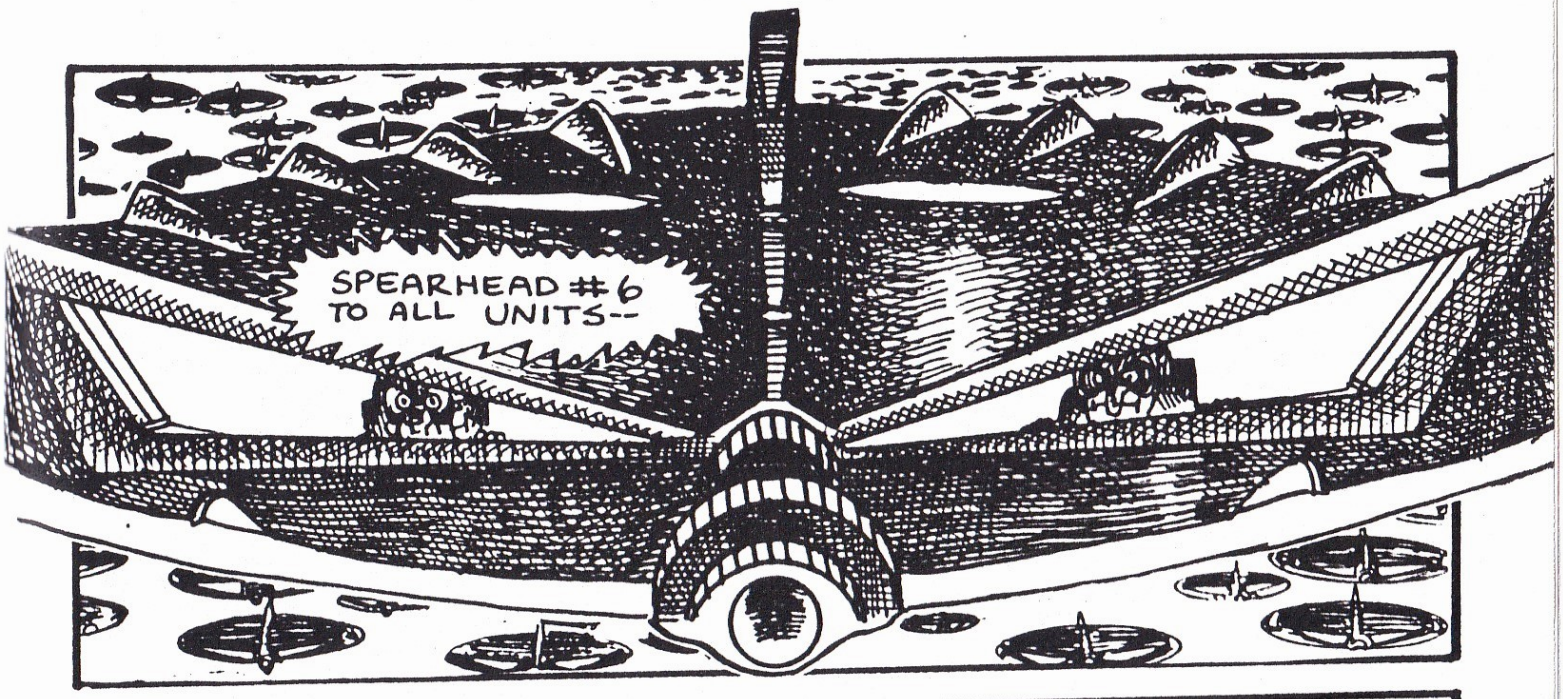
And now, the smoke-filled air is heavy with the hum of **infernal machines**... and a percussive cacophony of militaristic music fills the ether...

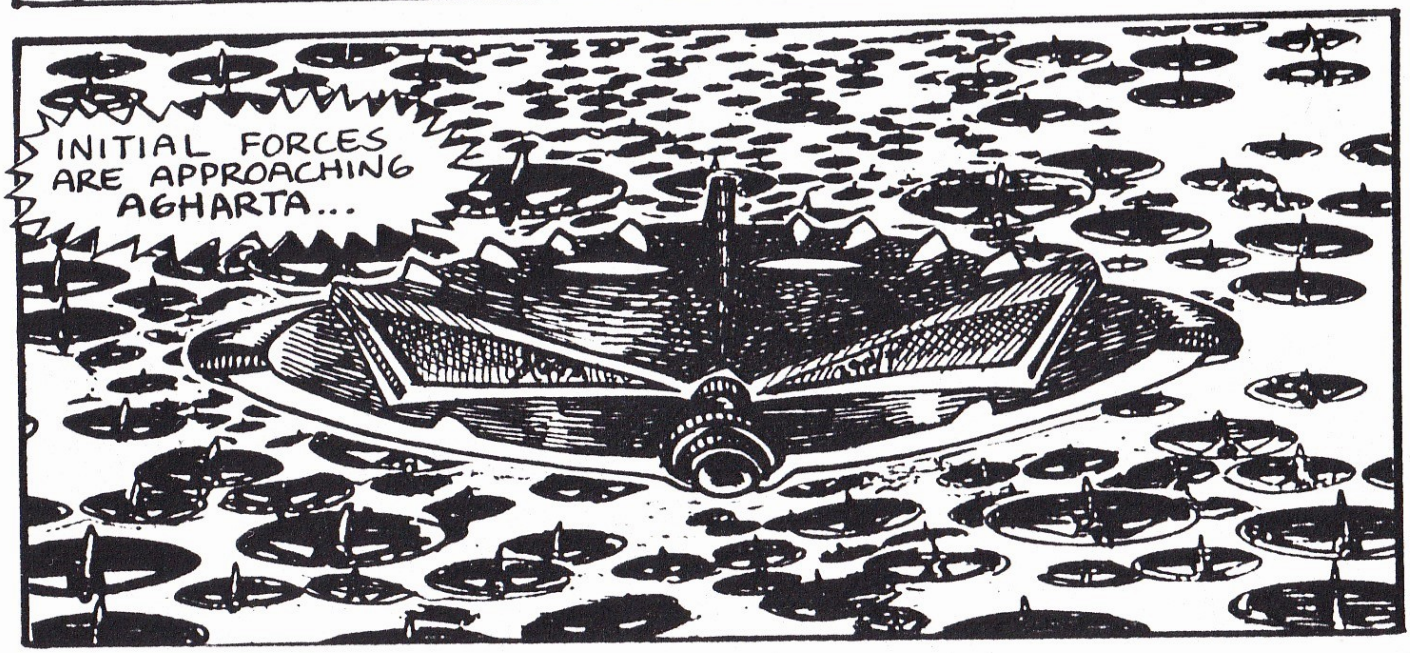
...as the curtain rises and our story continues...

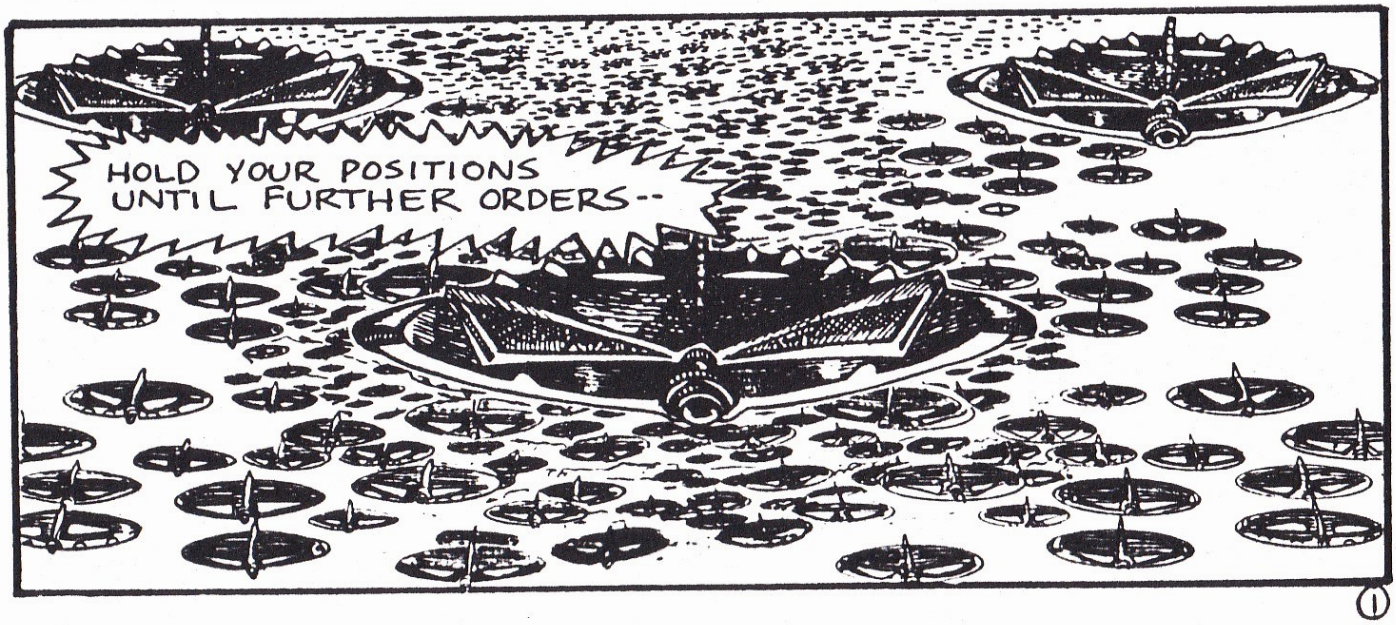
PART ELEVEN :

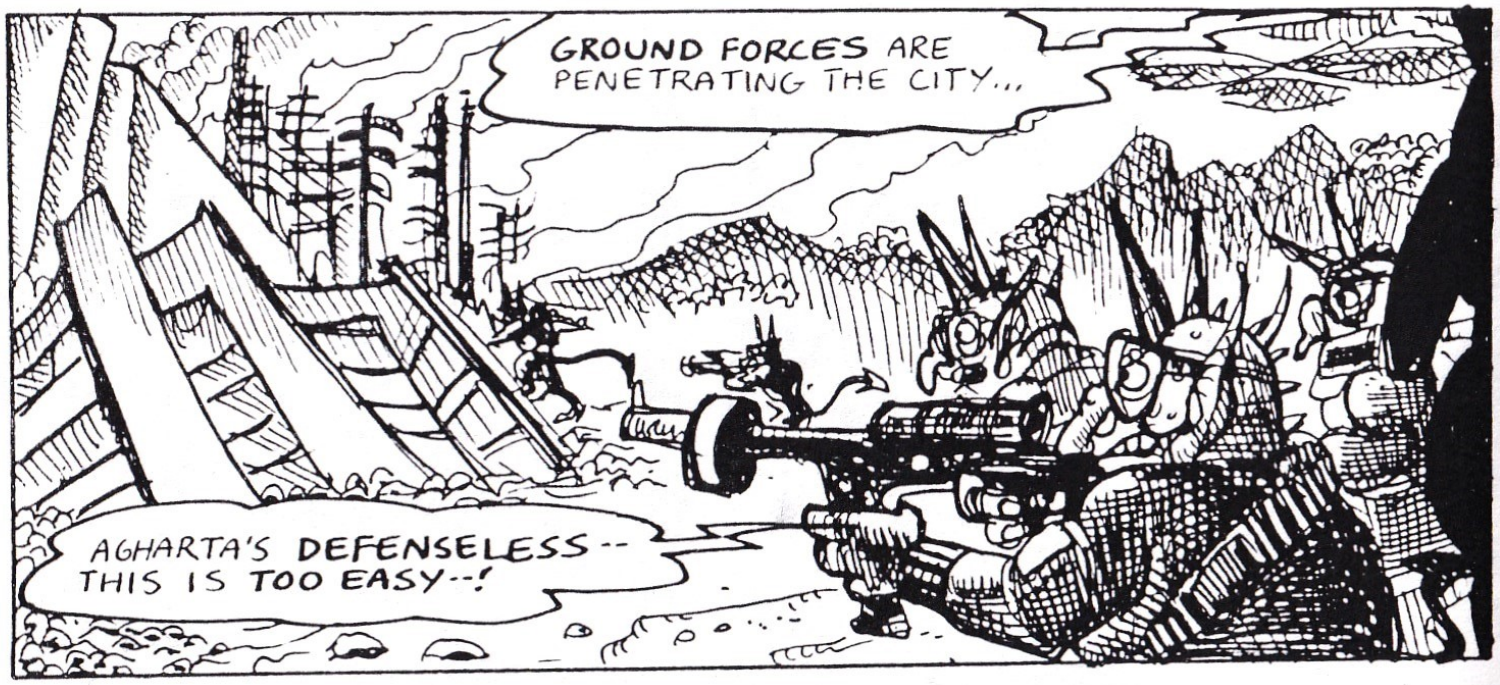
"MIND OVER MATTER"

WALTER KITTY, Vol. 1, No. 15, January 1994, published by AWK PROJECTS, 2701 Penny Lane, # 219, Austin, Texas 78757. Published whenever we can. Copyright © 1994 by Mark Shaw. All rights reserved. Price: $2.95 per copy. Walter Kitty, the characters in this comic book and their distinct likenesses are the property of Mark Shaw, AKA "Uncle" Mark. No similarity between any of the characters, names, persons, or institutions with those of any living or dead persons or institutions is intended. Any similarity which may exist is purely coincidental. Exploding from the eye of the universe IT came to rule the earth . . . in a kingdom of FEAR !! No, no, that's not it... Behind a barrier of Antarctic ice... a paradise of hidden terrors !! No--that's not it either...Hmmm... Terror runs rampant on the city streets... as the Monster strikes AGAIN !! Sigh... no, not that... Now what was it...? Down... Down... Down From the top of one world, to a world beyond belief underneath! The most astounding adventure ever conceived by man! --THAT'S IT!!!


SPEARHEAD #6
TO ALL UNITS--

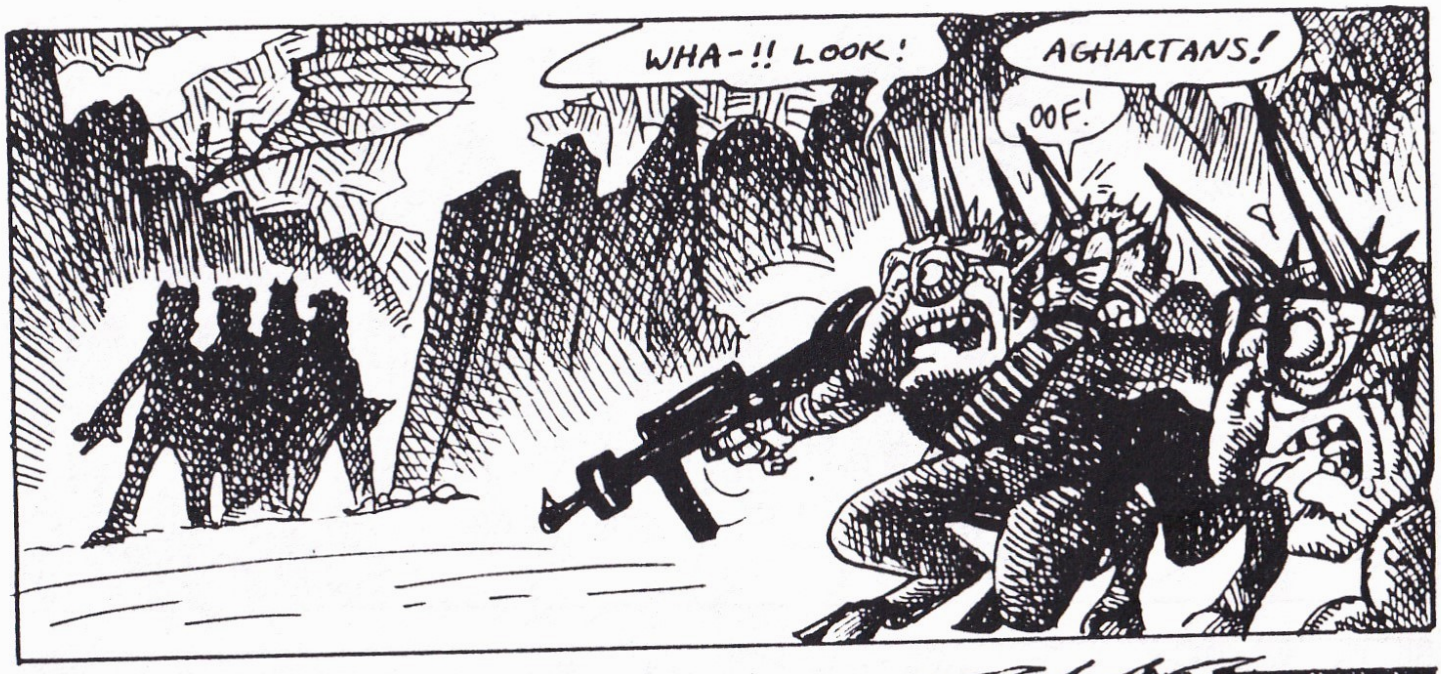

INITIAL FORCES
ARE APPROACHING
AGHARTA...

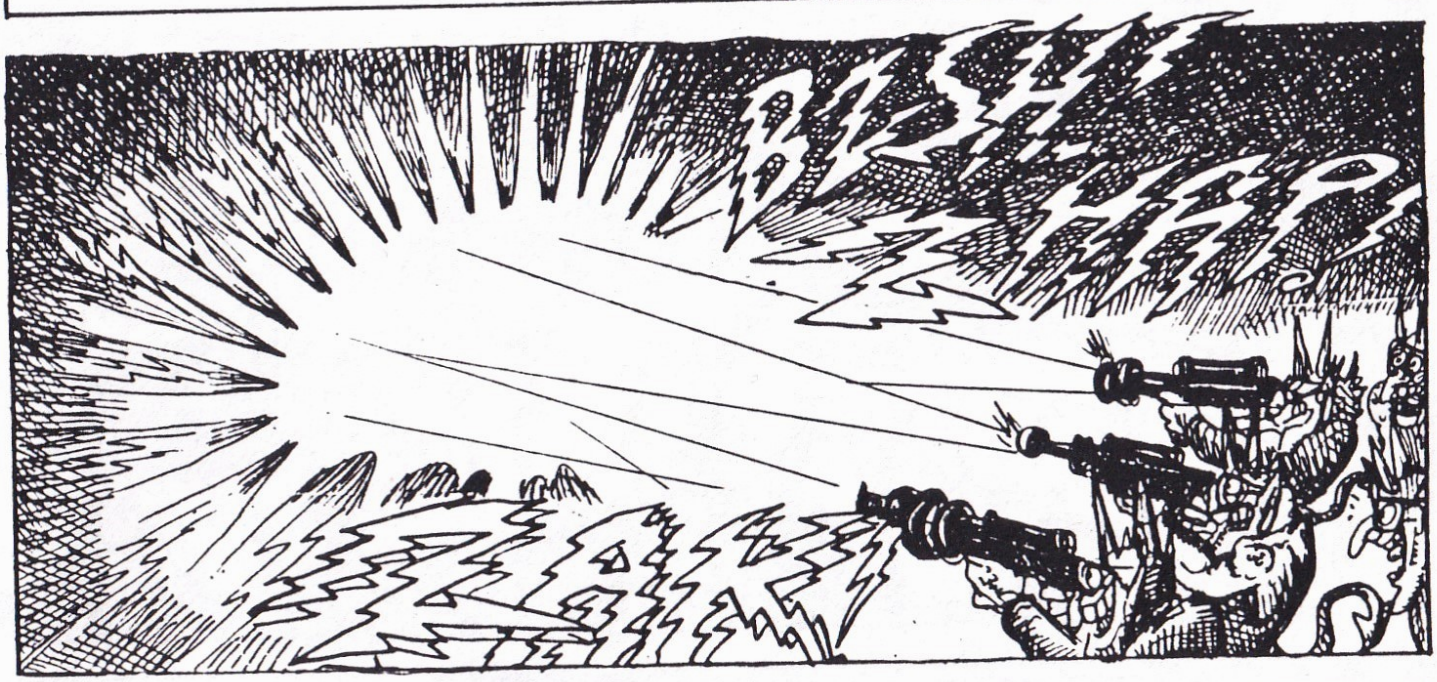

HOLD YOUR POSITIONS
UNTIL FURTHER ORDERS--

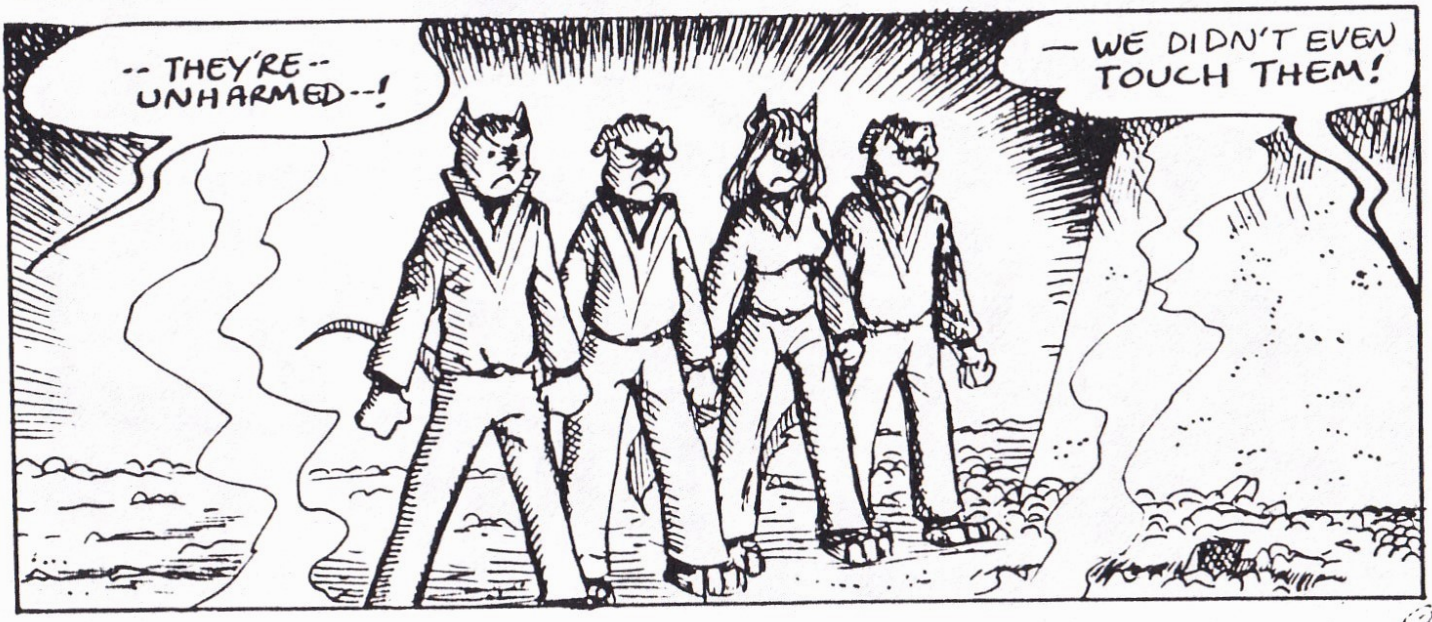

GROUND FORCES ARE PENETRATING THE CITY...
AGHARTA'S DEFENSELESS -- THIS IS TOO EASY--!

THERE'S NO ONE HERE -- NOT EVEN ANY BODIES!
THEY'RE ALL HIDING, PROBABLY...

I DON'T LIKE THIS...
— WILL YOU SHUT UP?!
QUIET, YOU TWO-!

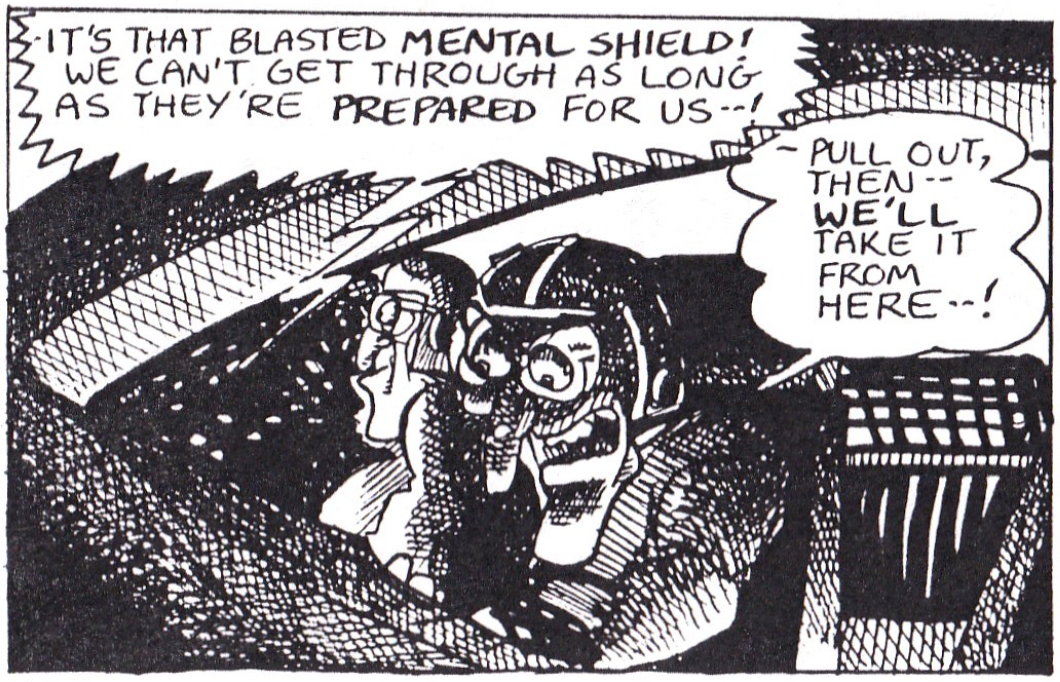

WHA-!! LOOK!
AGHARTANS!
OOF!


BZZH
FFFP

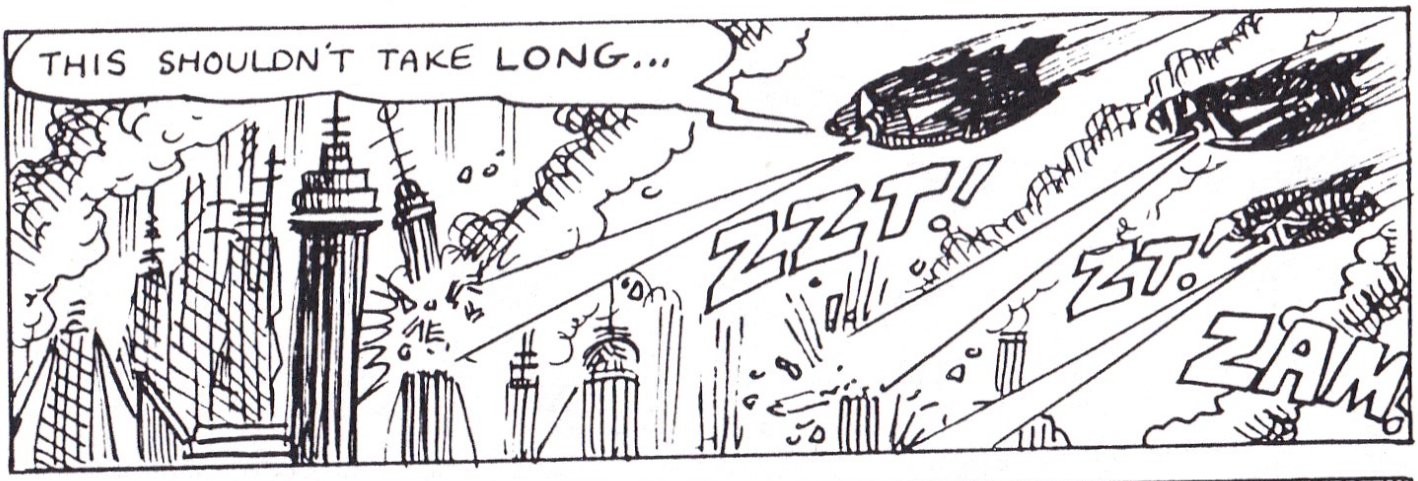

-- THEY'RE -- UNHARMED--!
— WE DIDN'T EVEN TOUCH THEM!

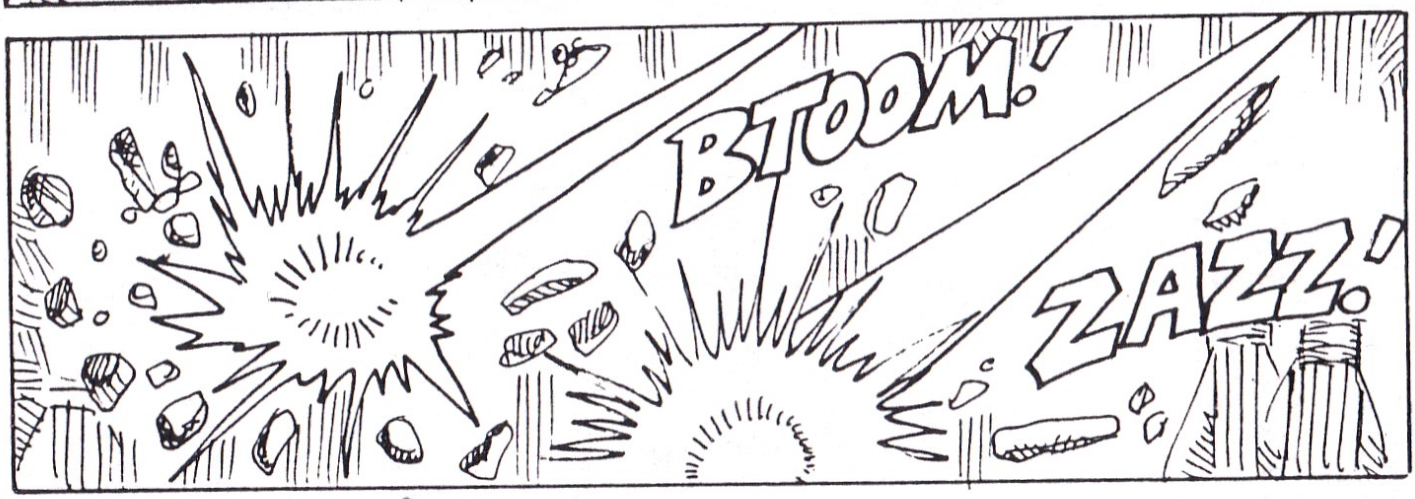
UH OH...

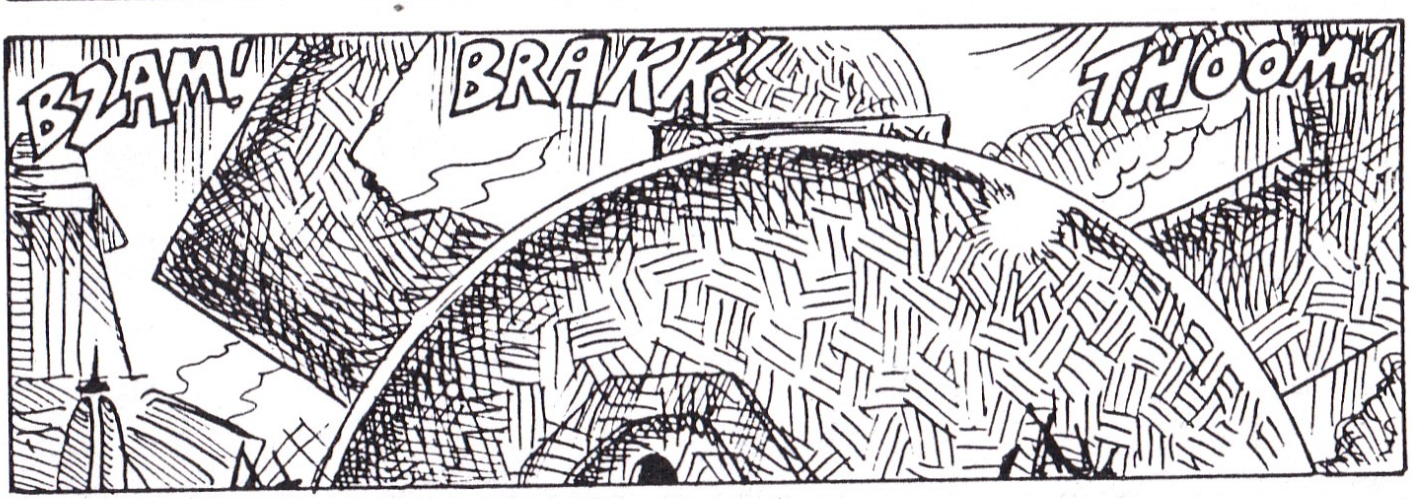
--FALL BACK-- FALL BACK!!
YOW!!
WE CANT TOUCH THEM--
— BUT THEY CAN TOUCH US!
AAA!!
ZZZT!

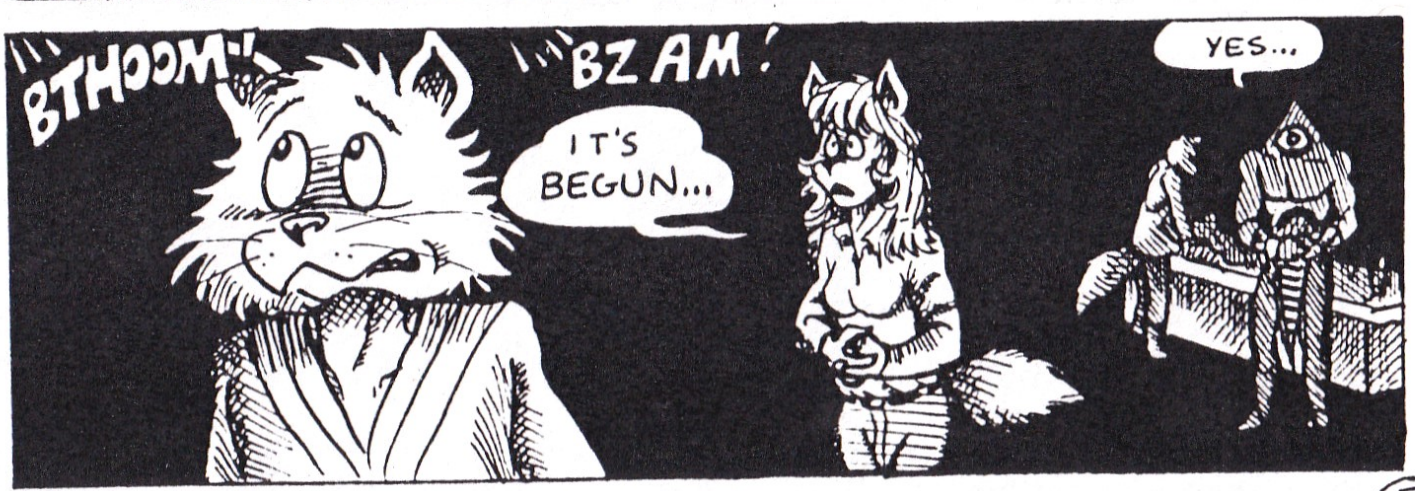

IT'S THAT BLASTED MENTAL SHIELD! WE CAN'T GET THROUGH AS LONG AS THEY'RE PREPARED FOR US--!
— PULL OUT, THEN-- WE'LL TAKE IT FROM HERE--!

SQUADRON 1-- PREPARE FOR OUR FIRST RUN-- ...REMEMBER-- NONSTOP BOMBARDMENT--! --THE AGHARTANS CANT HOLD UP FOREVER...


THIS SHOULDN'T TAKE LONG...
ZZZT!
ZT!
ZAM!


BTOOM!
ZAZZ!

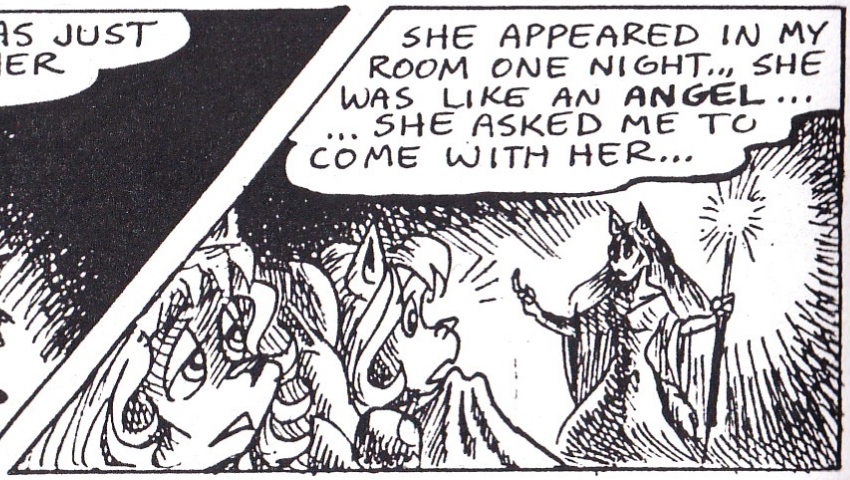

BZAM!
BRAKK!
THOOM!

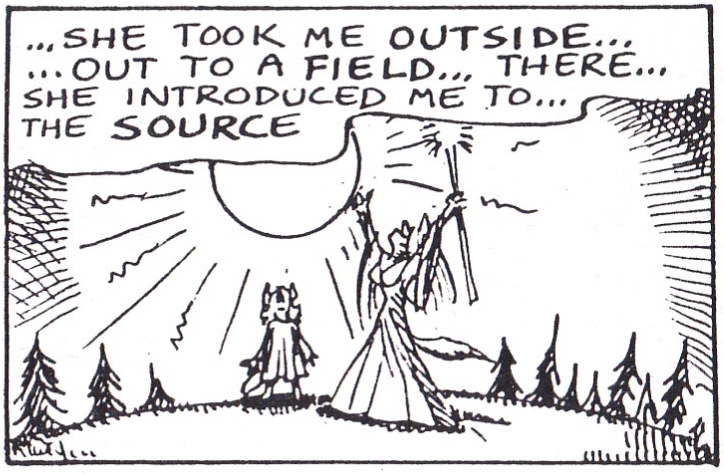

BTHOOM!
BZAM!
IT'S BEGUN...
YES...

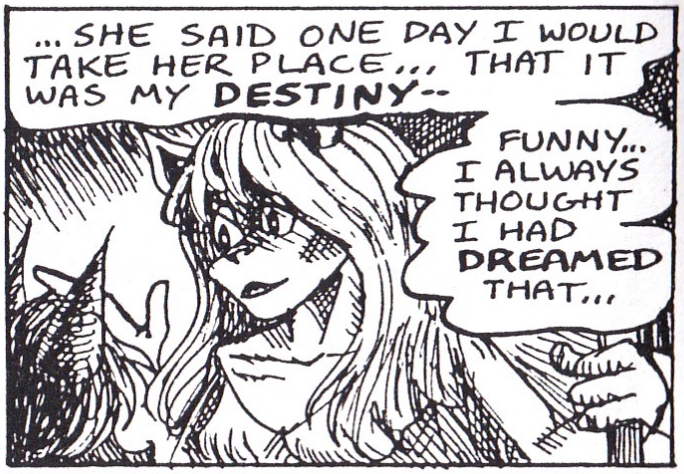
THERE'S NOT EVEN TIME TO GRIEVE, IS THERE?

...I DIDN'T EVEN KNOW MY MOTHER...

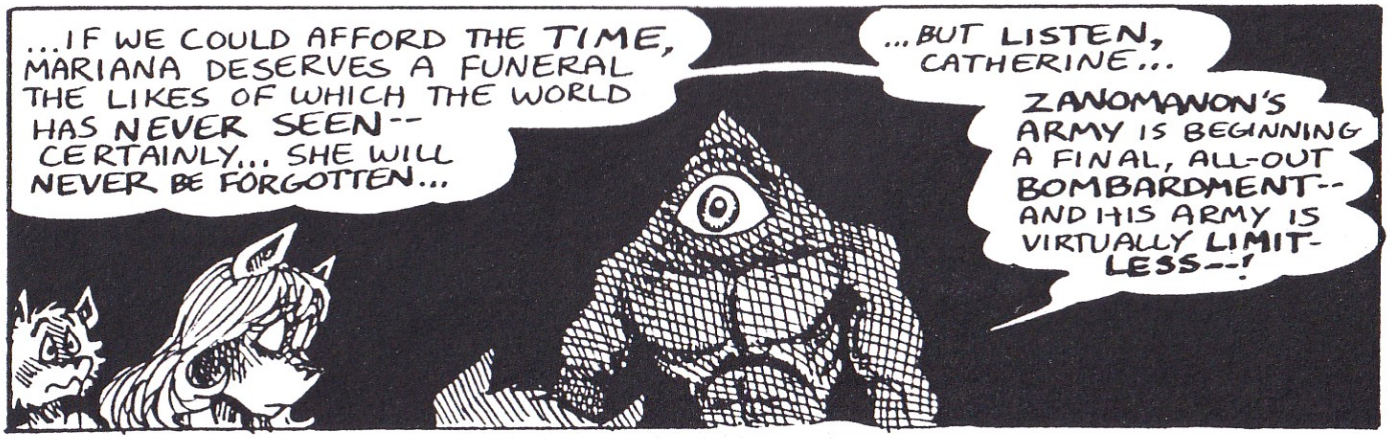
...SHE LEFT US WHEN I WAS JUST A BABY... I ONLY SAW HER ONCE AFTER THAT... THAT WAS WHEN I WAS... I DON'T KNOW... FIVE OR SIX...


SHE APPEARED IN MY ROOM ONE NIGHT... SHE WAS LIKE AN ANGEL... ...SHE ASKED ME TO COME WITH HER...


...SHE TOOK ME OUTSIDE... ...OUT TO A FIELD... THERE... SHE INTRODUCED ME TO... THE SOURCE

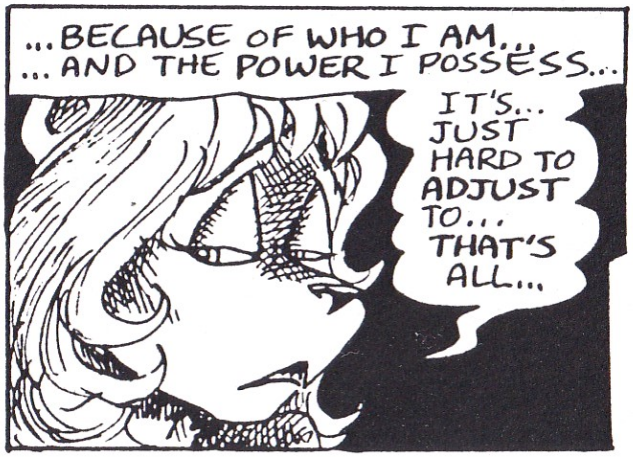

...SHE SAID ONE DAY I WOULD TAKE HER PLACE... THAT IT WAS MY DESTINY--
FUNNY... I ALWAYS THOUGHT I HAD DREAMED THAT...

...SHE WAS VERY BEAUTIFUL WASN'T SHE...?
BLAM!
I'M SORRY, CATHERINE...
BALOOM!

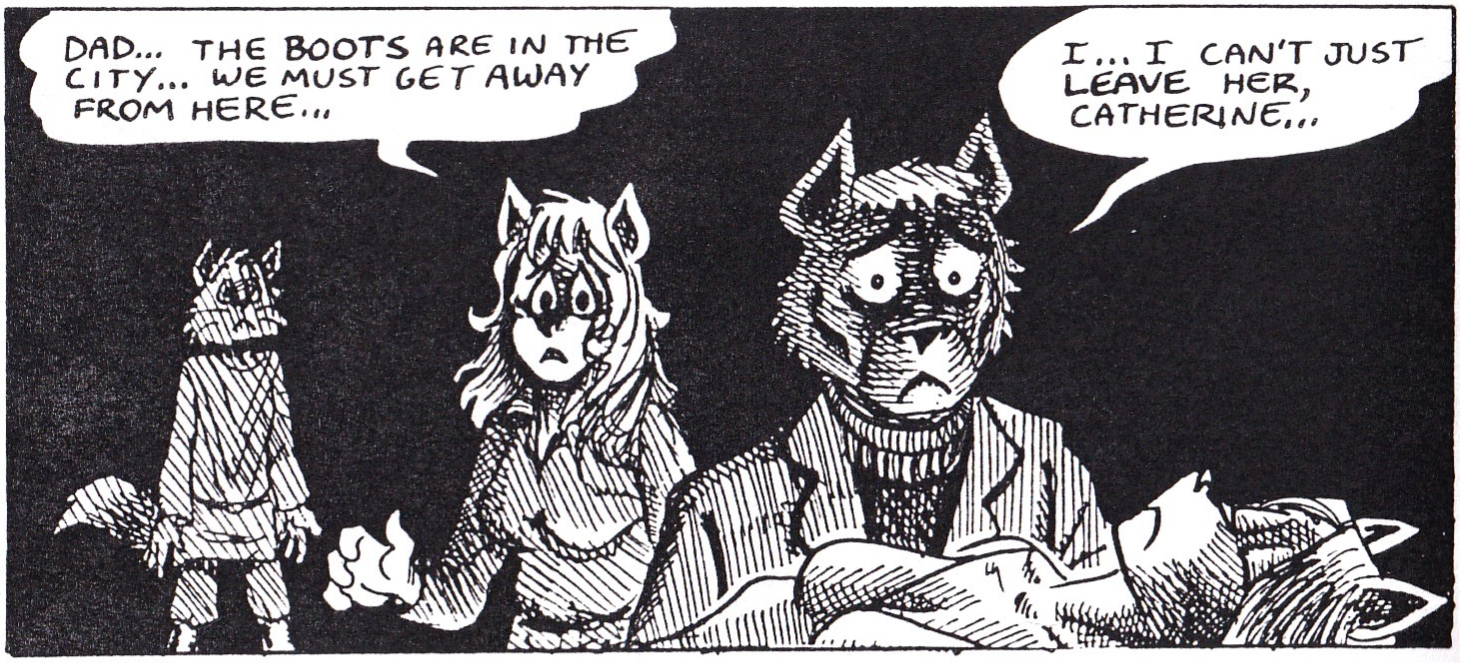

...IF WE COULD AFFORD THE TIME, MARIANA DESERVES A FUNERAL THE LIKES OF WHICH THE WORLD HAS NEVER SEEN-- CERTAINLY... SHE WILL NEVER BE FORGOTTEN...
...BUT LISTEN, CATHERINE...
ZANOMANON'S ARMY IS BEGINNING A FINAL, ALL-OUT BOMBARDMENT-- AND HIS ARMY IS VIRTUALLY LIMITLESS--!

...AND THE AGHARTAN PEOPLE ARE FEW AND GETTING FEWER-- ...MANY HAVE ALREADY BEEN KILLED...
...AND SOON, THE SOURCE ITSELF WILL BE TURNED AGAINST THEM...
CATHERINE... YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO FACE THIS! YOU'VE GOT TO SET ASIDE YOUR FEARS AND DO WHAT YOU MUST!
--YOU MUST SUMMON THE SOURCE!

- IT'S THE ONLY WAY-- YOU KNOW THIS--!
YES... I KNOW... YOU'RE RIGHT...
I GUESS I'VE KNOWN IT ALL ALONG... I JUST DIDN'T WANT TO FACE IT...
BUT NOW... ...I KNOW WHAT'S RIGHT... I KNOW I HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY--


...BECAUSE OF WHO I AM... ...AND THE POWER I POSSESS...
IT'S... JUST HARD TO ADJUST TO... THAT'S ALL...

BTHOOMMMK!
WOAH! THAT ONE DID DAMAGE!
CATHERINE--! YOU MUST LEAVE THE CITY--!


DAD... THE BOOTS ARE IN THE CITY... WE MUST GET AWAY FROM HERE...
I... I CAN'T JUST LEAVE HER, CATHERINE...

--I JUST CAN'T--
--YOU GO ON... YOU'RE NEEDED...

...BY YOUR PEOPLE...

... BELIEVE ME, I UNDERSTAND, DARLING... YOUR MOTHER EXPLAINED EVERYTHING TO ME...

... YOU'RE A PART OF BOTH OF US -- OF BOTH OUR WORLDS...

... BUT HER WORLD NEEDS YOU NOW --
... HER PEOPLE...

GO -- DO WHAT YOU CAN--!

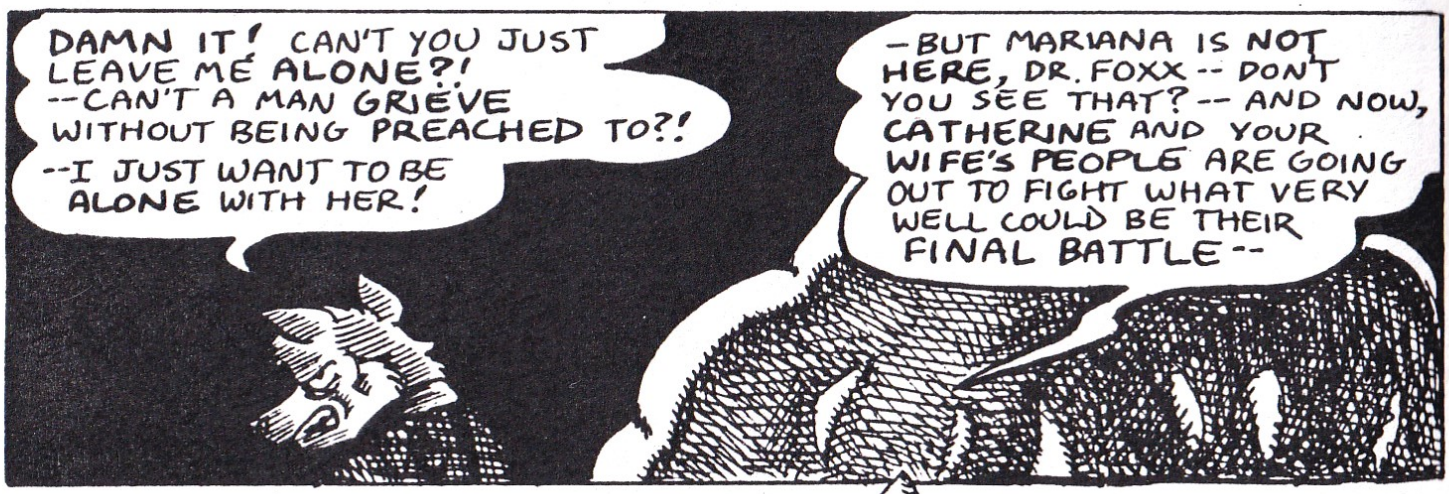
C-COME ON, WALTER-- ...WE'RE NEEDED...

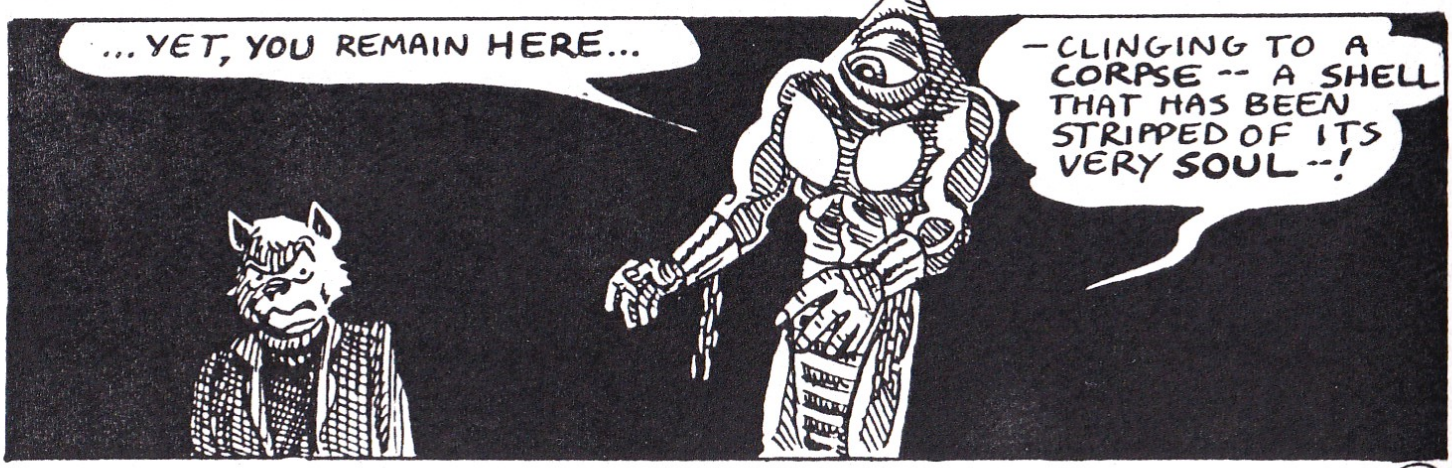
I AM ARIAN, CATHERINE... I CAN HELP YOU TO DO WHAT YOU MUST...
--HELP ME?

YES... TO SUMMON THE SOURCE--!

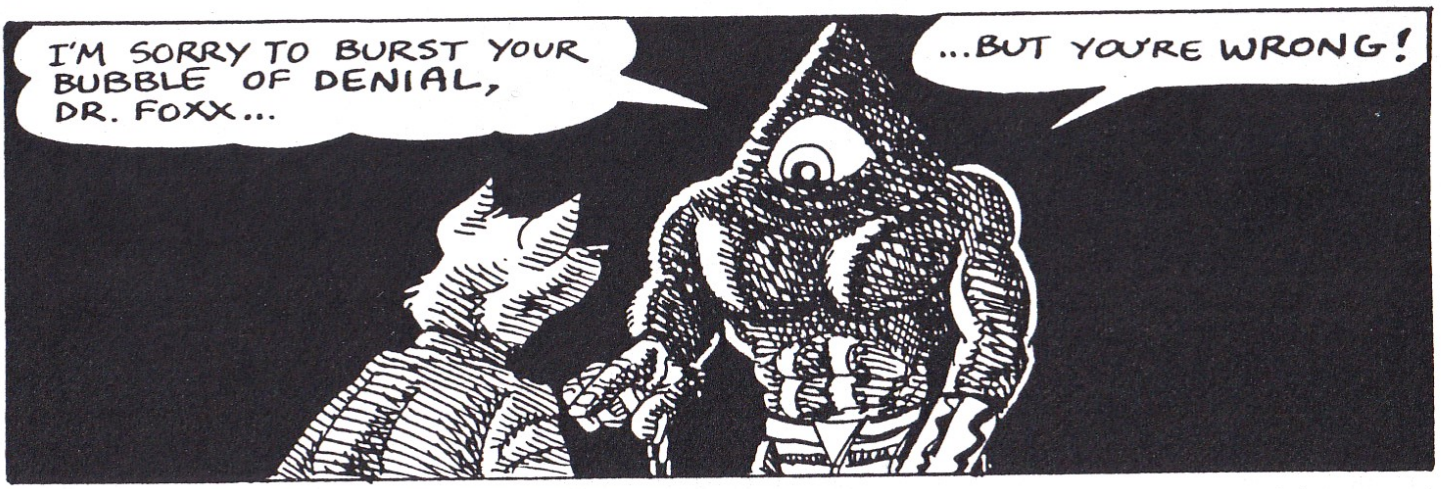
YES... SHE DOES LOOK DARKER, DOESN'T SHE, DR. FOXX--?
...AS IF A LIGHT HAD LEFT HER...
-OF COURSE, THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT HAS HAPPENED...

PLEASE--
WITHOUT THE SOUL, ONE'S BODY -- NO MATTER HOW FAIR IS STILL ONLY A BODY...


DAMN IT! CAN'T YOU JUST LEAVE ME ALONE?! --CAN'T A MAN GRIEVE WITHOUT BEING PREACHED TO?! --I JUST WANT TO BE ALONE WITH HER!
-BUT MARIANA IS NOT HERE, DR. FOXX -- DON'T YOU SEE THAT? -- AND NOW, CATHERINE AND YOUR WIFE'S PEOPLE ARE GOING OUT TO FIGHT WHAT VERY WELL COULD BE THEIR FINAL BATTLE--

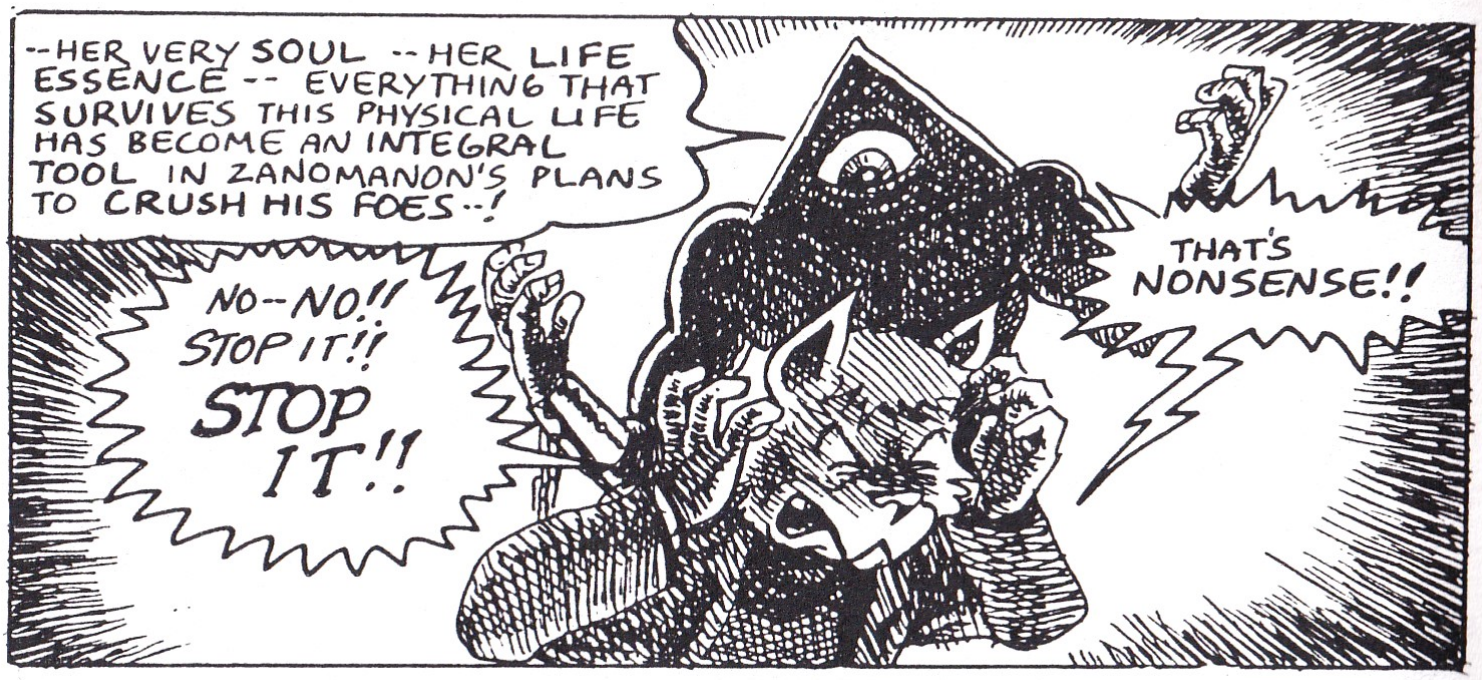

...YET, YOU REMAIN HERE...
-CLINGING TO A CORPSE -- A SHELL THAT HAS BEEN STRIPPED OF ITS VERY SOUL--!

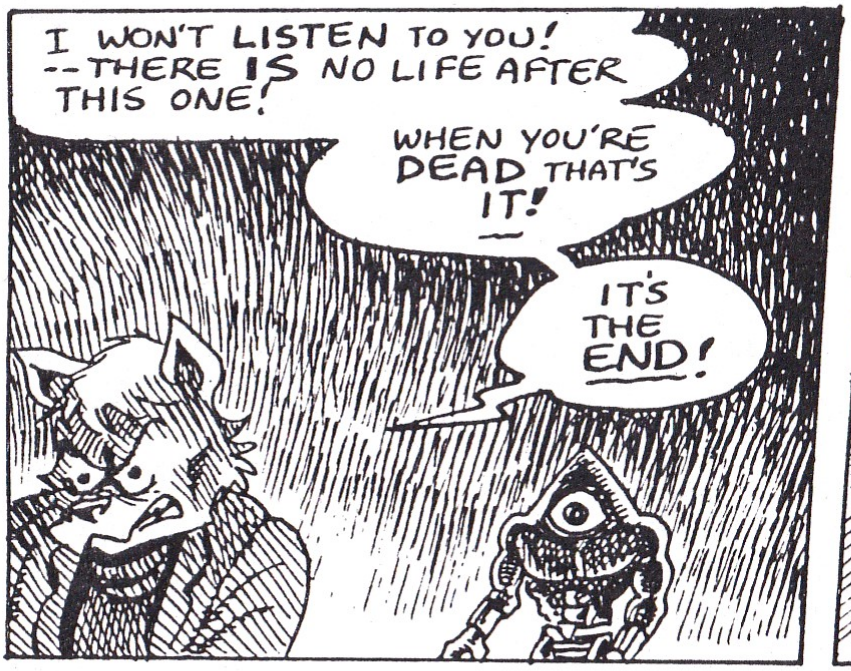
-IF YOU'RE REFERING TO THAT MADMAN WHO CLAIMED HE HAD ABSORBED HER SOUL WITH A RIDICULOUS DEVICE--
THAT WAS NOTHING BUT THE RAVING OF A LUNATIC!


I'M SORRY TO BURST YOUR BUBBLE OF DENIAL, DR. FOXX...
...BUT YOU'RE WRONG!

ZANOMANON IS NOT A LUNATIC~! HE IS OBSESSED WITH POWER, TRUE, AND HE IS MERCILESS, AND CRUEL, AND EVIL--
--BUT HE IS NOT MAD!

--THE DEVICE HE USED ON MARIANA WAS AN ENHANCED ABSORPTION CRYSTAL...
-WITH IT, HE HAS ENSLAVED HER, -- BEYOND THE DEATH OF HER BODY--

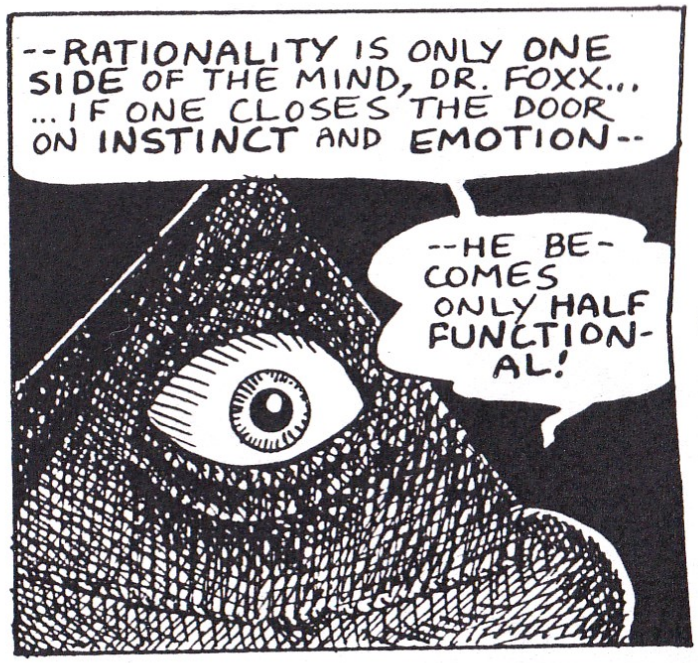

--HER VERY SOUL --HER LIFE ESSENCE -- EVERYTHING THAT SURVIVES THIS PHYSICAL LIFE HAS BECOME AN INTEGRAL TOOL IN ZANOMANON'S PLANS TO CRUSH HIS FOES--!
NO--NO!! STOP IT!! STOP IT!!
THAT'S NONSENSE!!


I WON'T LISTEN TO YOU! --THERE IS NO LIFE AFTER THIS ONE!
WHEN YOU'RE DEAD THAT'S IT!
IT'S THE END!

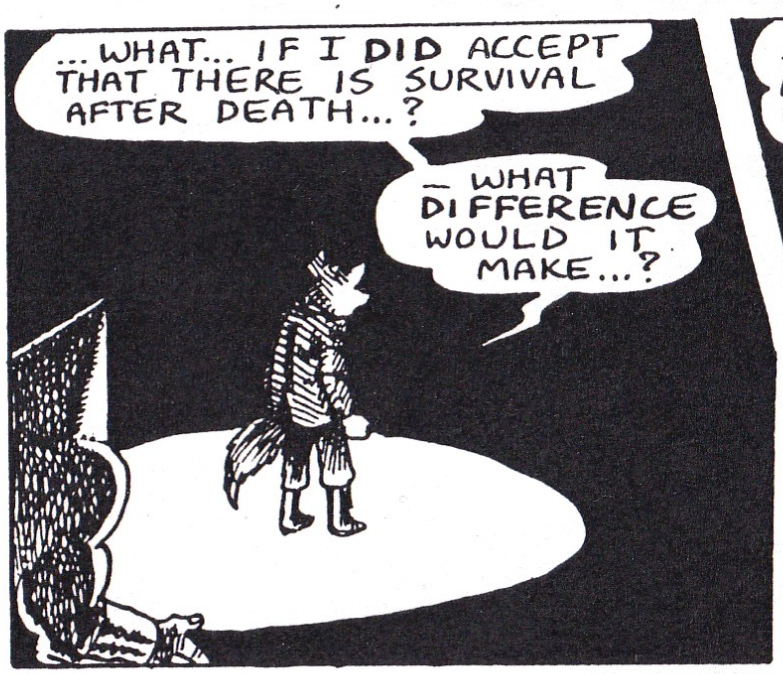
--IT'S THE END OF A STUPID, SENSELESS EXISTENCE THAT IS AS BRIEF AS IT IS COINCIDENTAL!!

IF YOU BELIEVE THAT, DR. FOXX... --WHY ARE YOU CONSTANTLY ATTEMPTING TO PROVE IT TO YOURSELF?
-- LOOK AT YOU--!

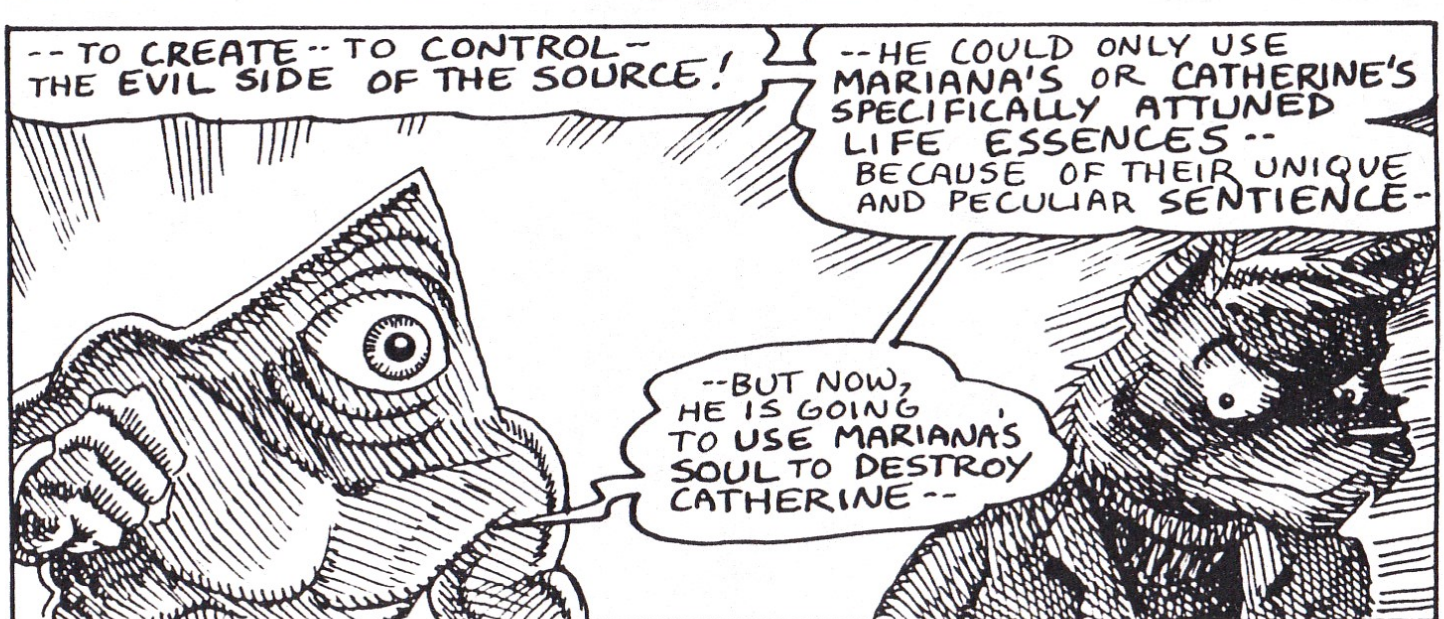
-EVEN NOW YOU ARE TRYING TO DENY WHAT YOU KNOW INSTINCTIVELY--
-- THAT'S SOMETHING YOU HAVE DONE FOR TOO LONG-!


--RATIONALITY IS ONLY ONE SIDE OF THE MIND, DR. FOXX... ...IF ONE CLOSES THE DOOR ON INSTINCT AND EMOTION--
--HE BECOMES ONLY HALF FUNCTIONAL!

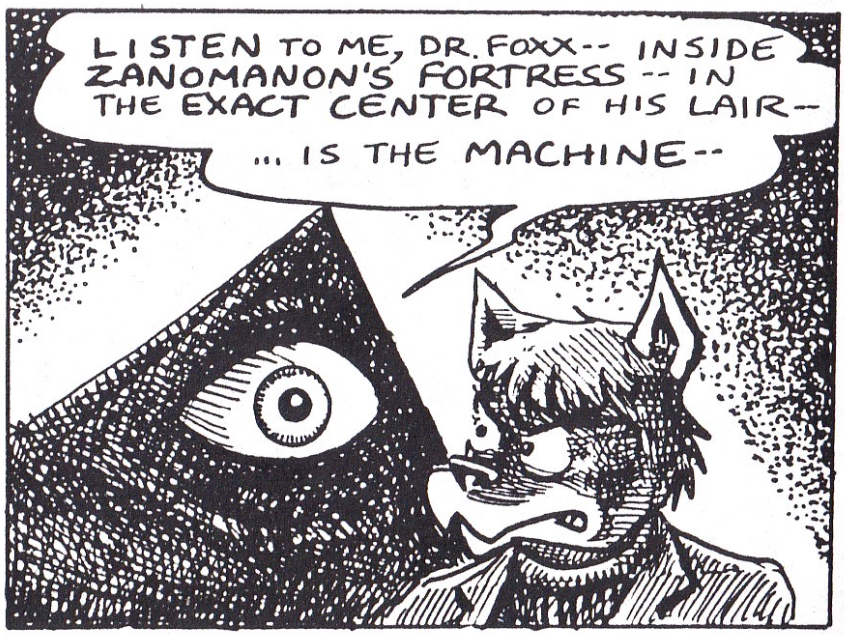
--YOU KNOW IN YOUR HEART THAT MARIANA STILL LIVES--
—DON'T LISTEN TO YOUR MIND, DOCTOR...
-- FEEL WITH YOUR SOUL!

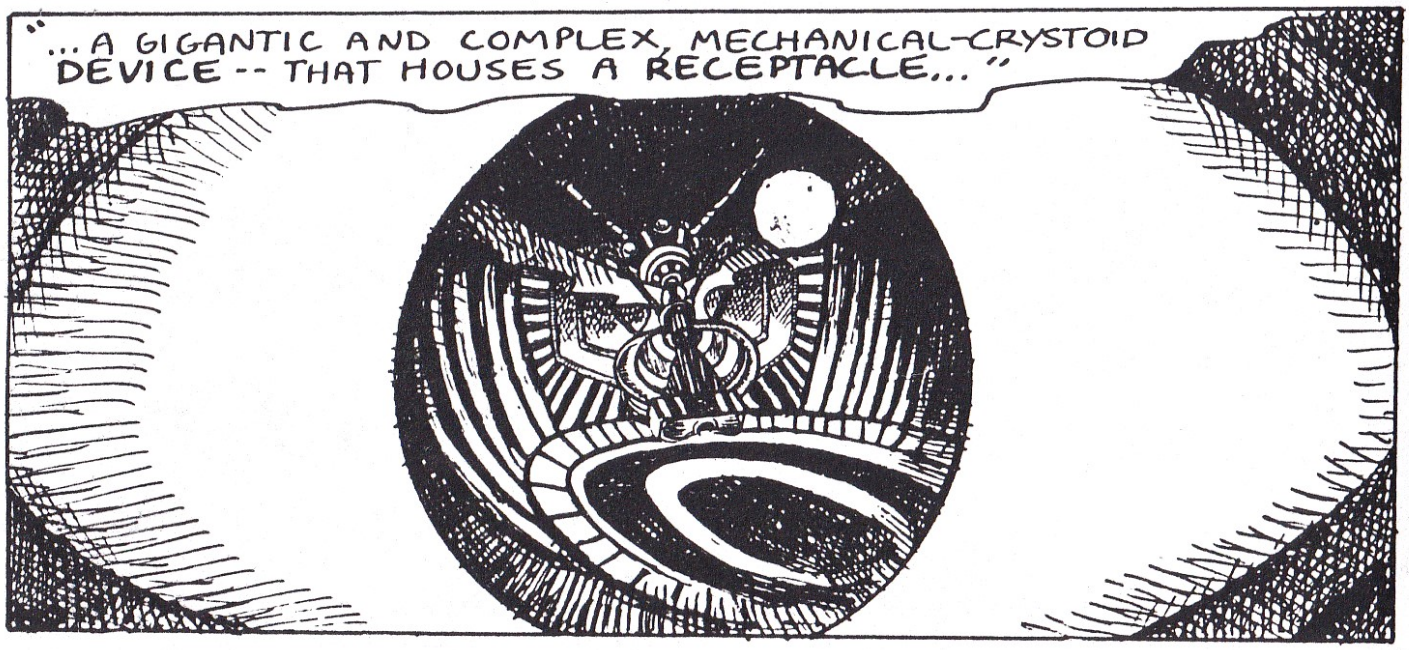

...WHAT... IF I DID ACCEPT THAT THERE IS SURVIVAL AFTER DEATH...?
—WHAT DIFFERENCE WOULD IT MAKE...?

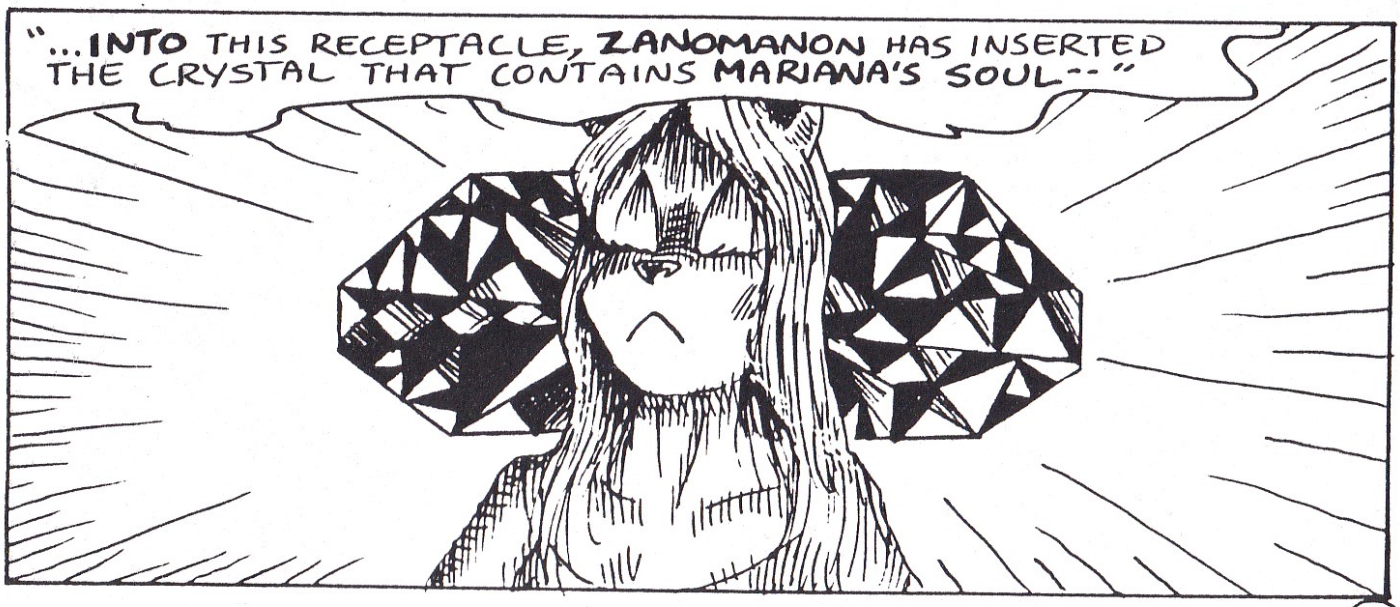
—THE DIFFERENCE -- IS THAT MARIANA'S SOUL IS BEING USED BY THAT VILLAIN--
--TO TAP INTO THE PURE ESSENCE OF EVIL!!


--TO CREATE -- TO CONTROL-- THE EVIL SIDE OF THE SOURCE!
--HE COULD ONLY USE MARIANA'S OR CATHERINE'S SPECIFICALLY ATTUNED LIFE ESSENCES -- BECAUSE OF THEIR UNIQUE AND PECULIAR SENTIENCE--
--BUT NOW, HE IS GOING TO USE MARIANA'S SOUL TO DESTROY CATHERINE--

--AND ALL OF YOU--!

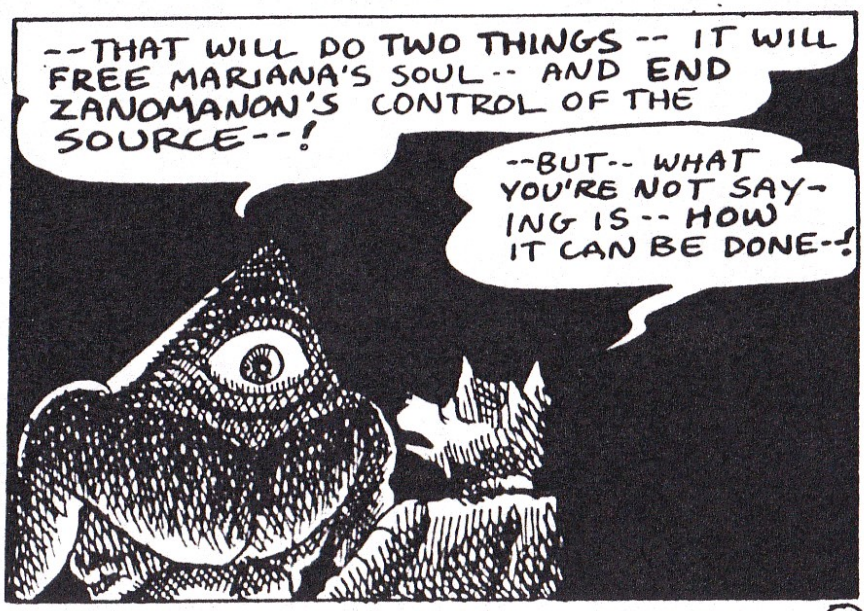

LISTEN TO ME, DR. FOXX-- INSIDE ZANOMANON'S FORTRESS -- IN THE EXACT CENTER OF HIS LAIR--
... IS THE MACHINE--


"...A GIGANTIC AND COMPLEX, MECHANICAL-CRYSTOID DEVICE -- THAT HOUSES A RECEPTACLE..."


"...INTO THIS RECEPTACLE, ZANOMANON HAS INSERTED THE CRYSTAL THAT CONTAINS MARIANA'S SOUL--"

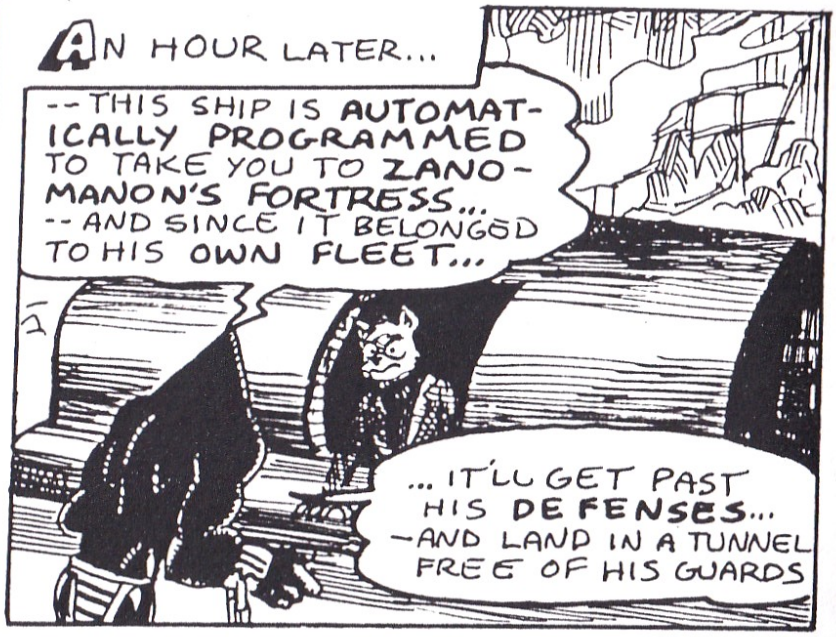
"ONCE ACTIVATED BY THAT, THE MACHINE HARNESSES AND FOCUSES THE SUBCONSCIOUS PSYCHIC ENERGY OF ALL THE SOULS ON THE EARTH--

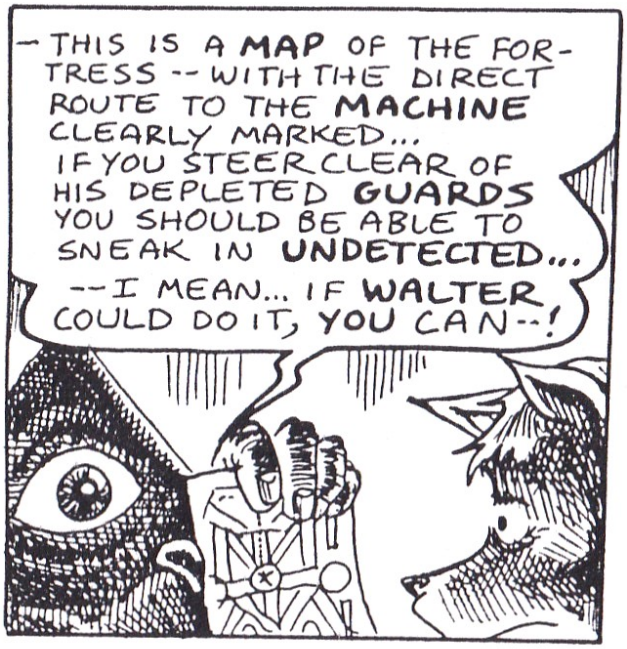
--SUMMONING THE NEGATIVE SIDE OF THE SOURCE -- UNDER THE CONTROL OF ZANOMANON -- WHO, GIVEN TIME, WILL DESTROY THIS WORLD THROUGH HIS MISUSE OF IT--!!

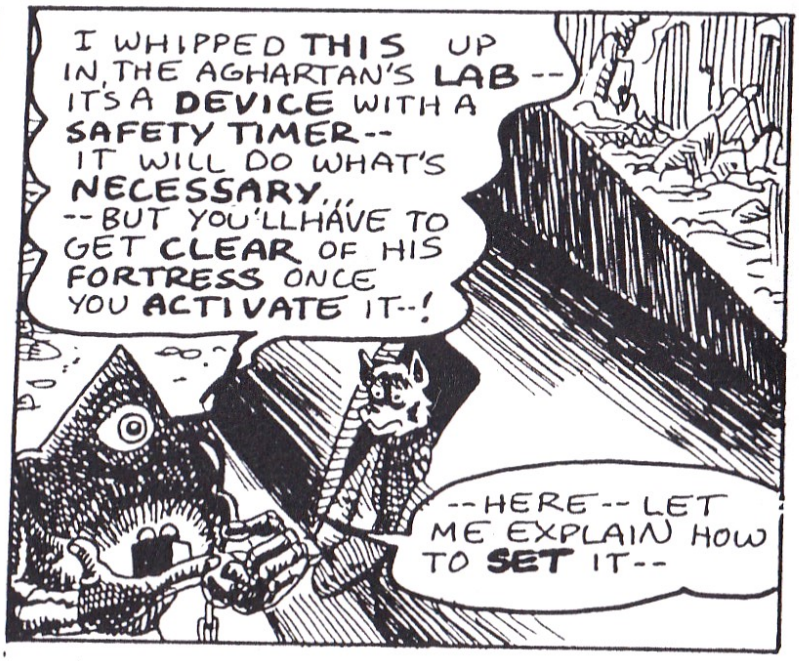


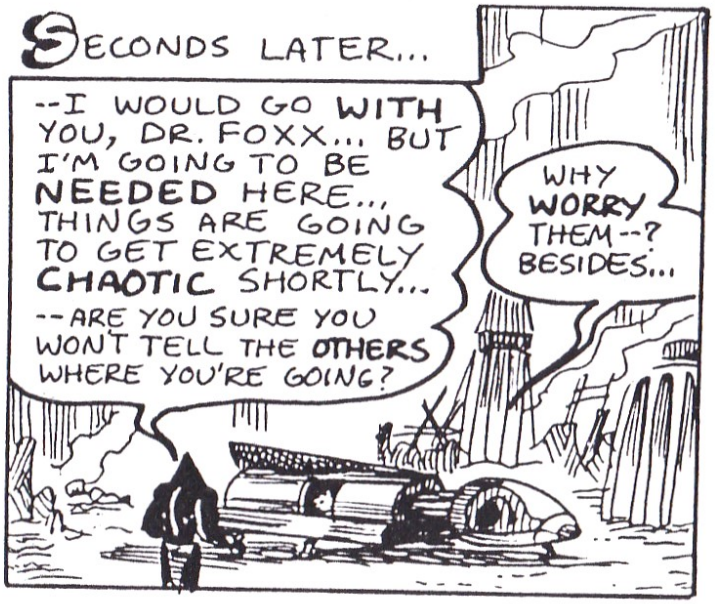
...ACTUALLY... THERE IS A WAY...
AND WHERE MANY MIGHT FAIL...

-ONE MIGHT DO MUCH--

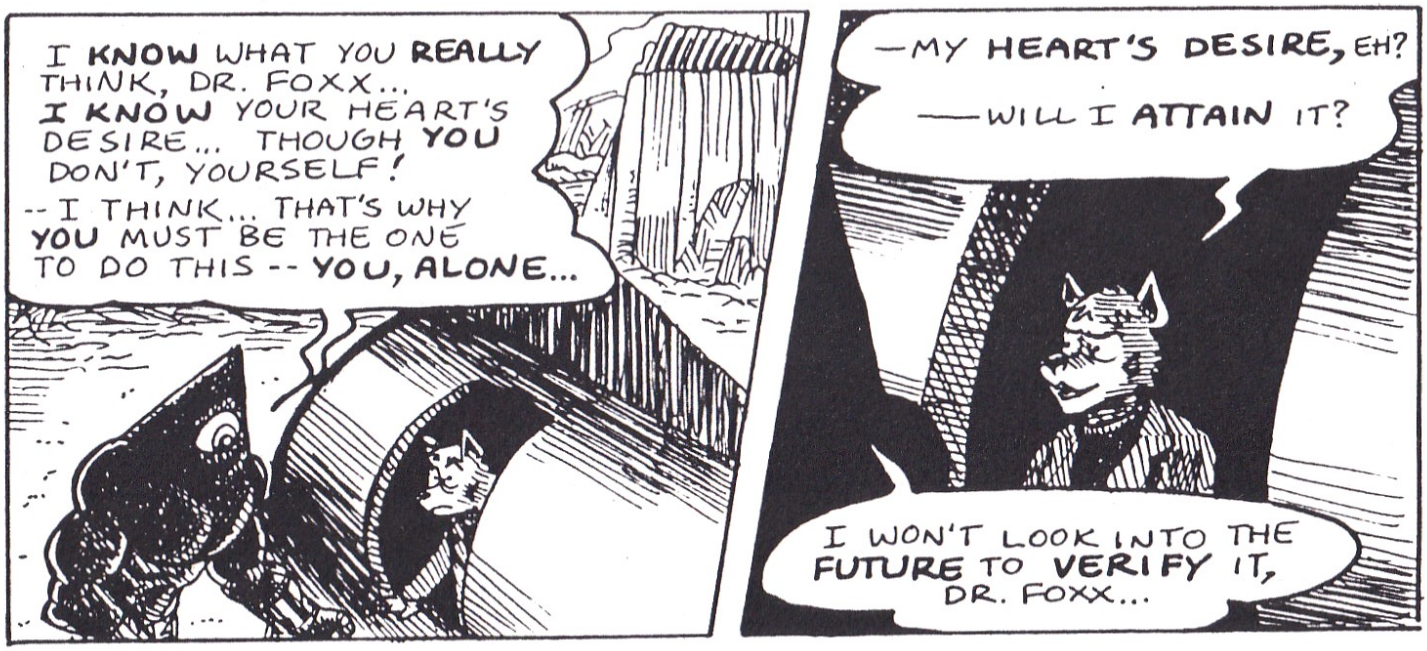

AN HOUR LATER...
--THIS SHIP IS AUTOMATICALLY PROGRAMMED TO TAKE YOU TO ZANOMANON'S FORTRESS... --AND SINCE IT BELONGED TO HIS OWN FLEET...
...IT'LL GET PAST HIS DEFENSES... -AND LAND IN A TUNNEL FREE OF HIS GUARDS

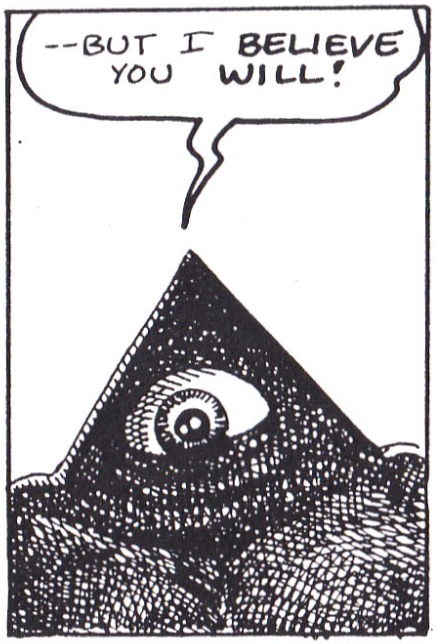

-THIS IS A MAP OF THE FORTRESS -- WITH THE DIRECT ROUTE TO THE MACHINE CLEARLY MARKED... IF YOU STEER CLEAR OF HIS DEPLETED GUARDS YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO SNEAK IN UNDETECTED...
--I MEAN... IF WALTER COULD DO IT, YOU CAN--!

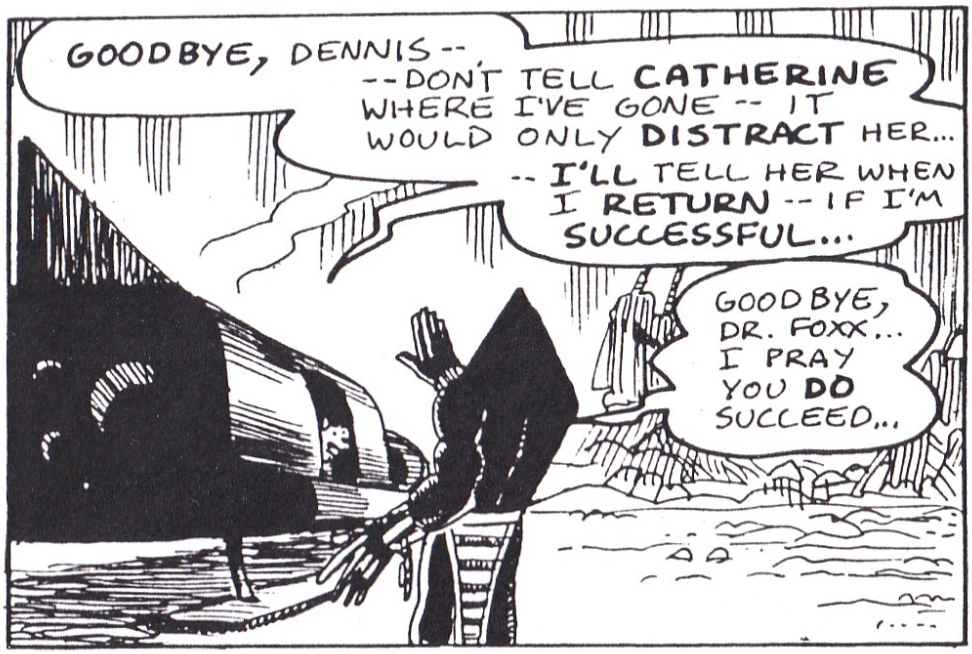

I WHIPPED THIS UP IN THE AGHARTAN'S LAB -- IT'S A DEVICE WITH A SAFETY TIMER-- IT WILL DO WHAT'S NECESSARY... --BUT YOU'LL HAVE TO GET CLEAR OF HIS FORTRESS ONCE YOU ACTIVATE IT--!
--HERE-- LET ME EXPLAIN HOW TO SET IT--

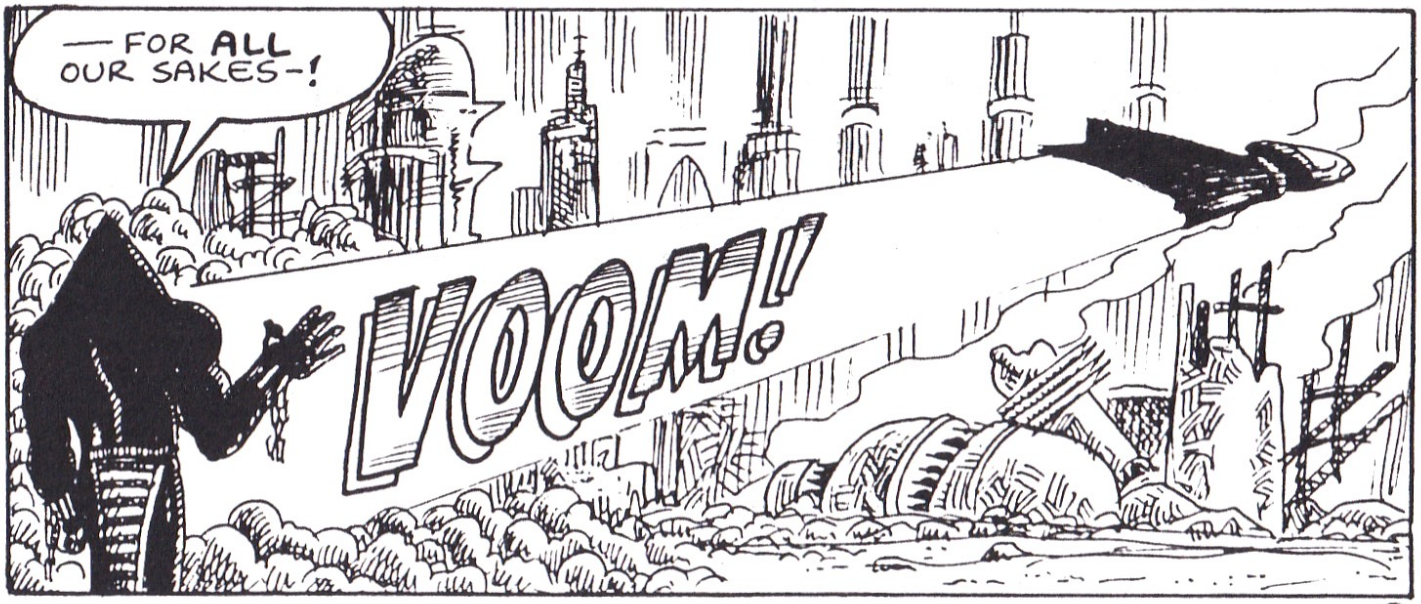

SECONDS LATER...
--I WOULD GO WITH YOU, DR. FOXX... BUT I'M GOING TO BE NEEDED HERE... THINGS ARE GOING TO GET EXTREMELY CHAOTIC SHORTLY...
--ARE YOU SURE YOU WON'T TELL THE OTHERS WHERE YOU'RE GOING?
WHY WORRY THEM--? BESIDES...

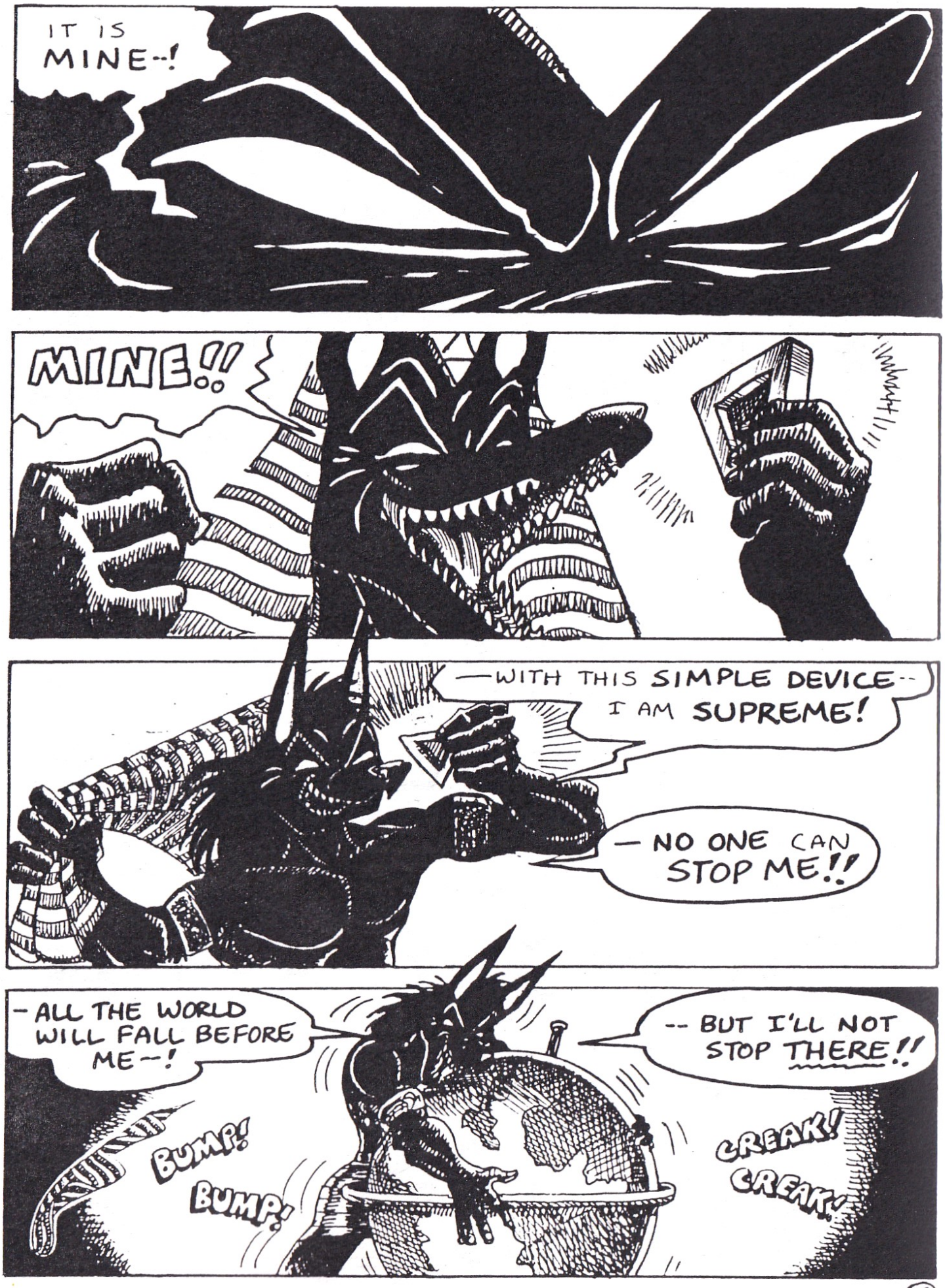
THEY'D EITHER STOP ME FROM GOING -- OR SEND MORE PEOPLE WITH ME-- --AND THEY CAN'T AFFORD TO SPARE ANYONE ELSE-- --ESPECIALLY FOR SUCH A HOPELESSLY FOOLISH MISSION--

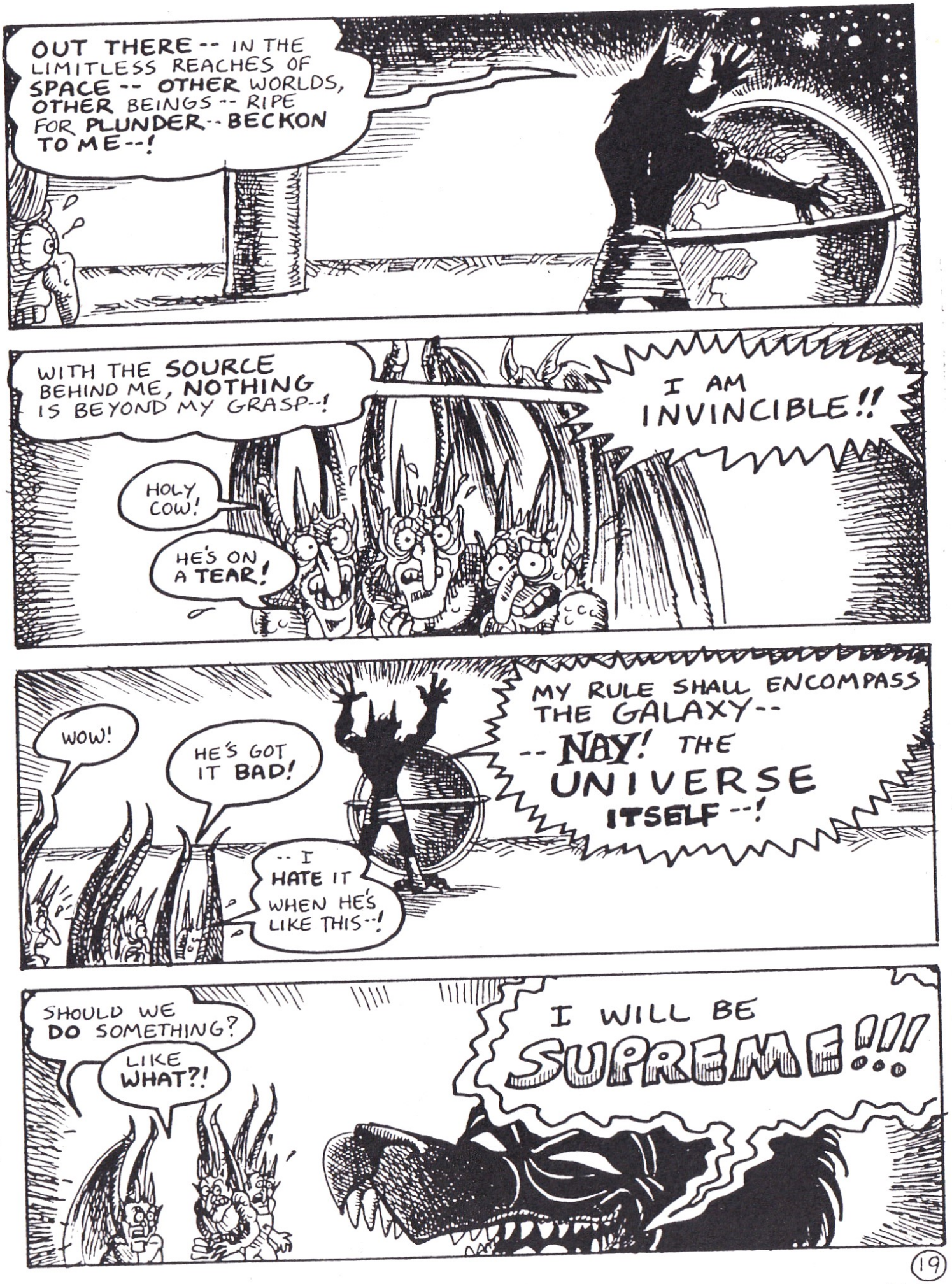

I KNOW WHAT YOU REALLY THINK, DR. FOXX... I KNOW YOUR HEART'S DESIRE... THOUGH YOU DON'T, YOURSELF!
-- I THINK... THAT'S WHY YOU MUST BE THE ONE TO DO THIS -- YOU, ALONE...
—MY HEART'S DESIRE, EH?
—WILL I ATTAIN IT?
I WON'T LOOK INTO THE FUTURE TO VERIFY IT, DR. FOXX...

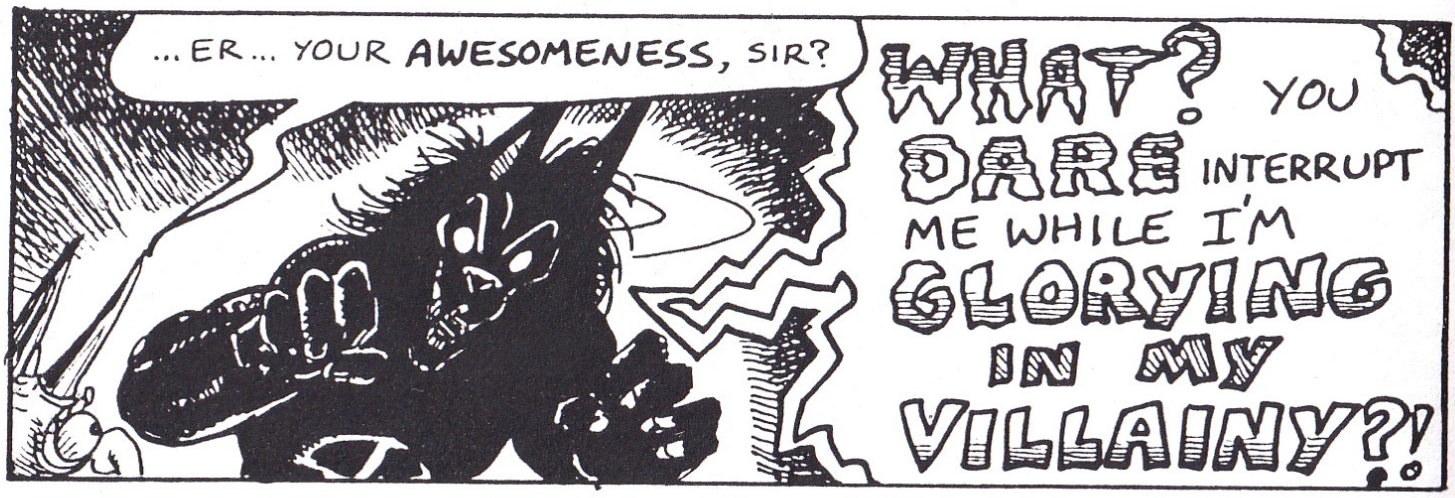

--BUT I BELIEVE YOU WILL!


GOODBYE, DENNIS --
--DON'T TELL CATHERINE WHERE I'VE GONE -- IT WOULD ONLY DISTRACT HER...
-- I'LL TELL HER WHEN I RETURN -- IF I'M SUCCESSFUL...
GOODBYE, DR. FOXX... I PRAY YOU DO SUCCEED...

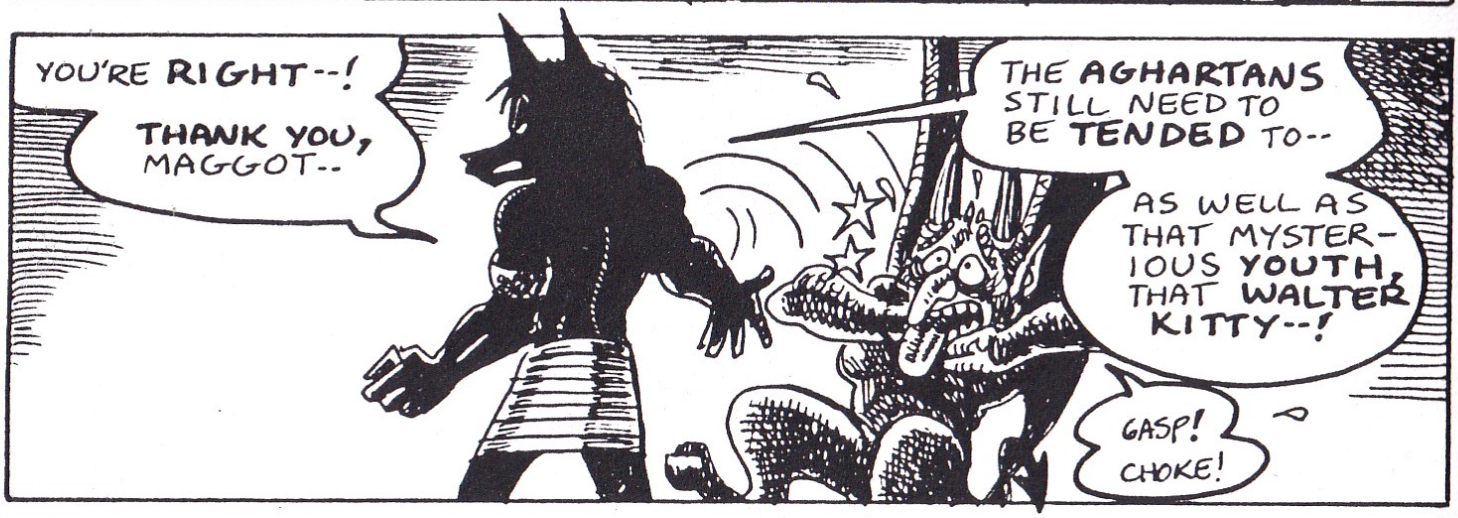

—FOR ALL OUR SAKES-!
VOOM!


IT IS MINE--!
MINE!!
—WITH THIS SIMPLE DEVICE-- I AM SUPREME!
— NO ONE CAN STOP ME!!
-ALL THE WORLD WILL FALL BEFORE ME--!
-- BUT I'LL NOT STOP THERE!!
BUMP!
BUMP!
CREAK!
CREAK!

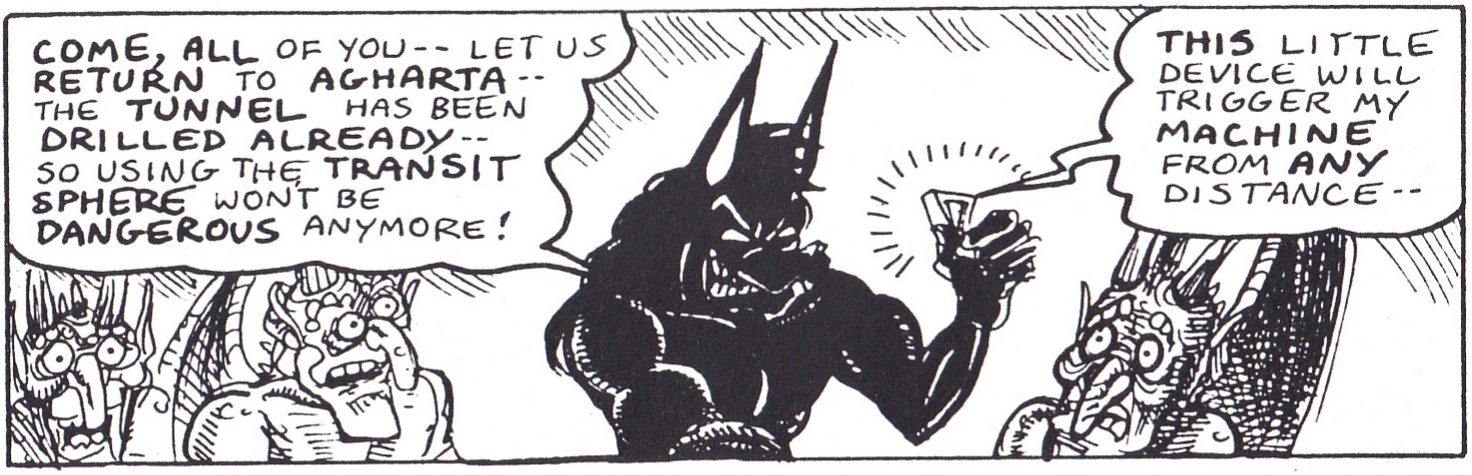

OUT THERE -- IN THE LIMITLESS REACHES OF SPACE -- OTHER WORLDS, OTHER BEINGS -- RIPE FOR PLUNDER -- BECKON TO ME --!
WITH THE SOURCE BEHIND ME, NOTHING IS BEYOND MY GRASP--!
I AM INVINCIBLE!!
HOLY COW!
HE'S ON A TEAR!
WOW!
HE'S GOT IT BAD!
-- I HATE IT WHEN HE'S LIKE THIS--!
MY RULE SHALL ENCOMPASS THE GALAXY--
-- NAY! THE UNIVERSE ITSELF --!
SHOULD WE DO SOMETHING?
LIKE WHAT?!
I WILL BE SUPREME!!!

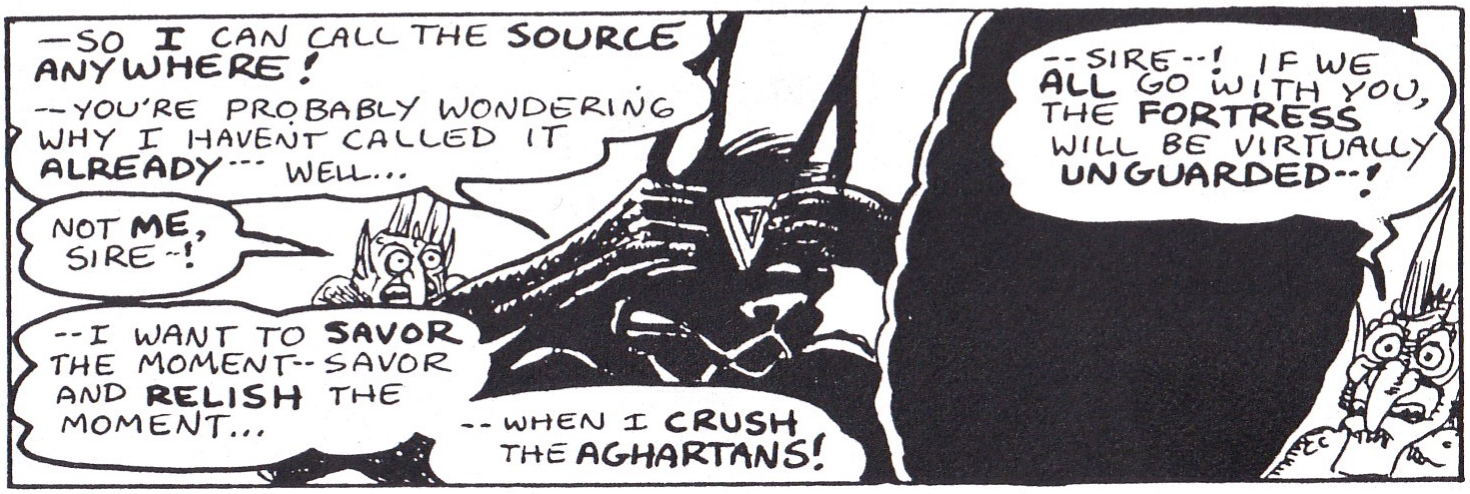

...ER... YOUR AWESOMENESS, SIR?
WHAT? YOU DARE INTERRUPT ME WHILE I'M GLORYING IN MY VILLAINY?!

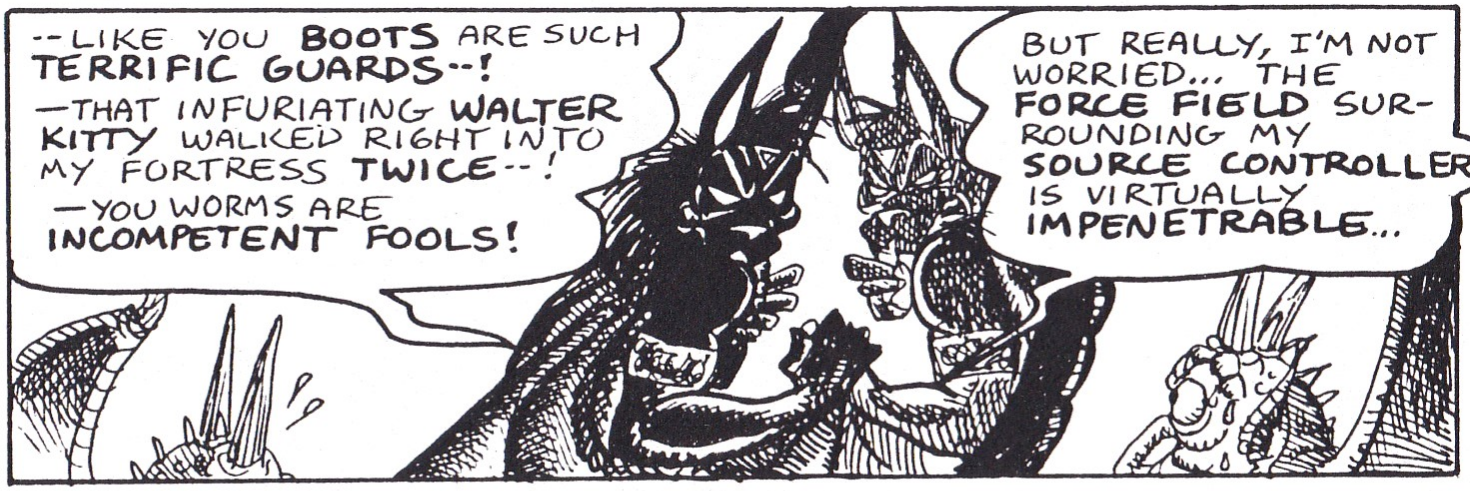
BUT WHAT ABOUT—AK-! —THE GIRL, CATHERINE?
SHE CAN STILL CALL THE SOURCE TOO, CAN'T SHE?

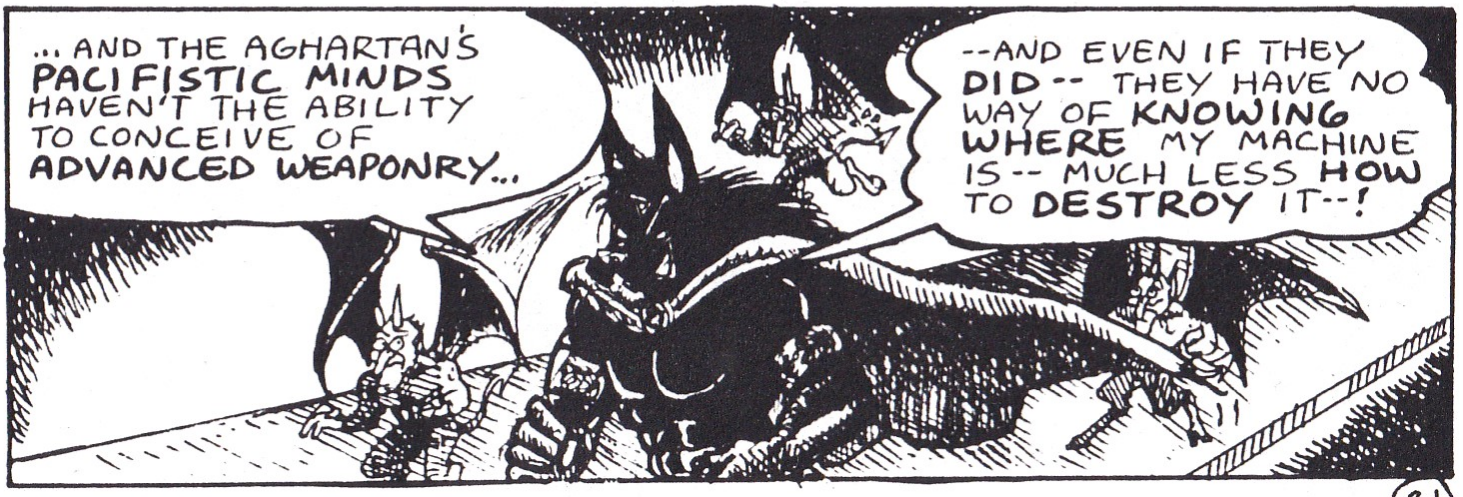

YOU'RE RIGHT--!
THANK YOU, MAGGOT--
THE AGHARTANS STILL NEED TO BE TENDED TO--
AS WELL AS THAT MYSTERIOUS YOUTH, THAT WALTER KITTY--!
GASP! CHOKE!

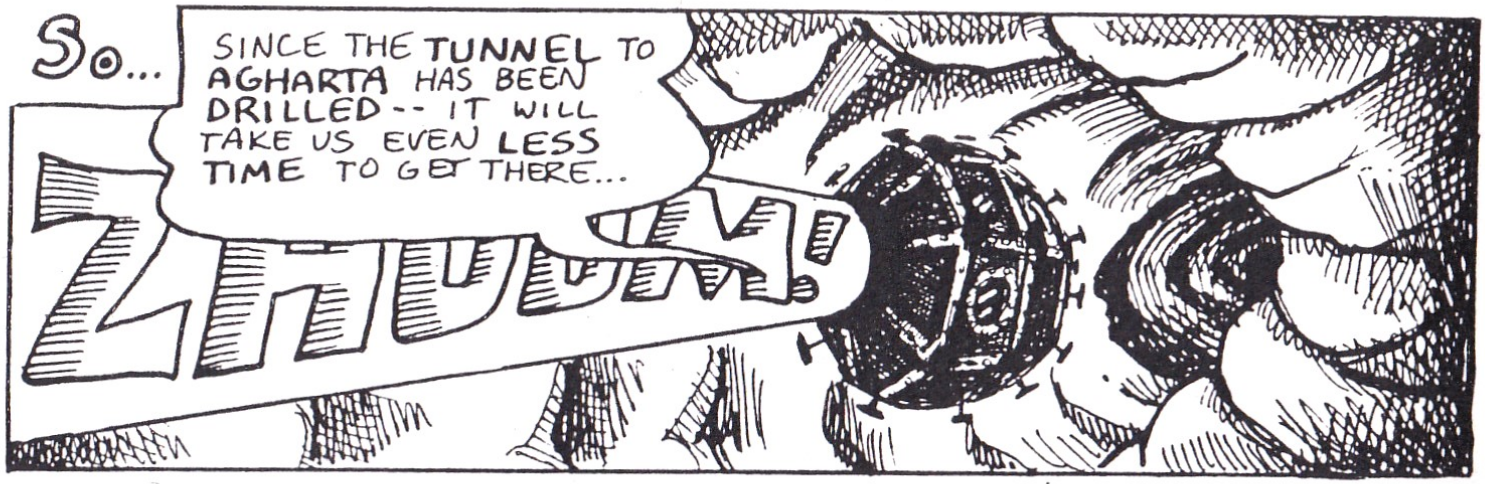
—SOMETIMES, I FORGET MYSELF--!
YOU DON'T THINK ALL THIS POWER WILL GO TO MY HEAD, DO YOU?
--N-NEVER, SIRE--!

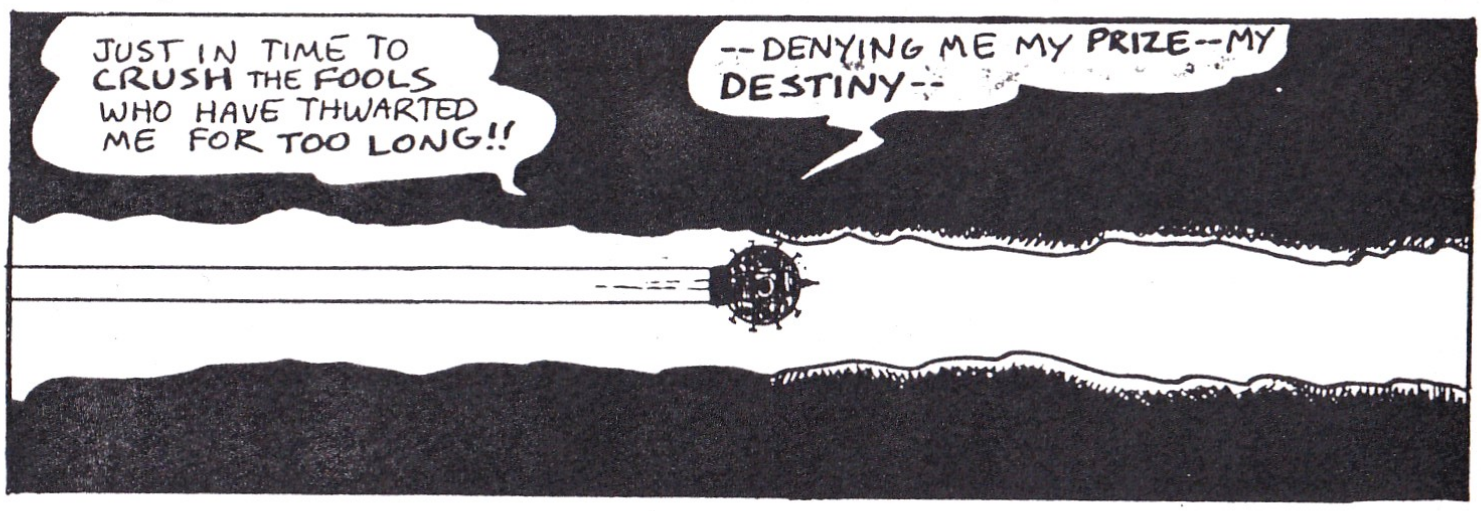

COME, ALL OF YOU-- LET US RETURN TO AGHARTA-- THE TUNNEL HAS BEEN DRILLED ALREADY-- SO USING THE TRANSIT SPHERE WONT BE DANGEROUS ANYMORE!
THIS LITTLE DEVICE WILL TRIGGER MY MACHINE FROM ANY DISTANCE--

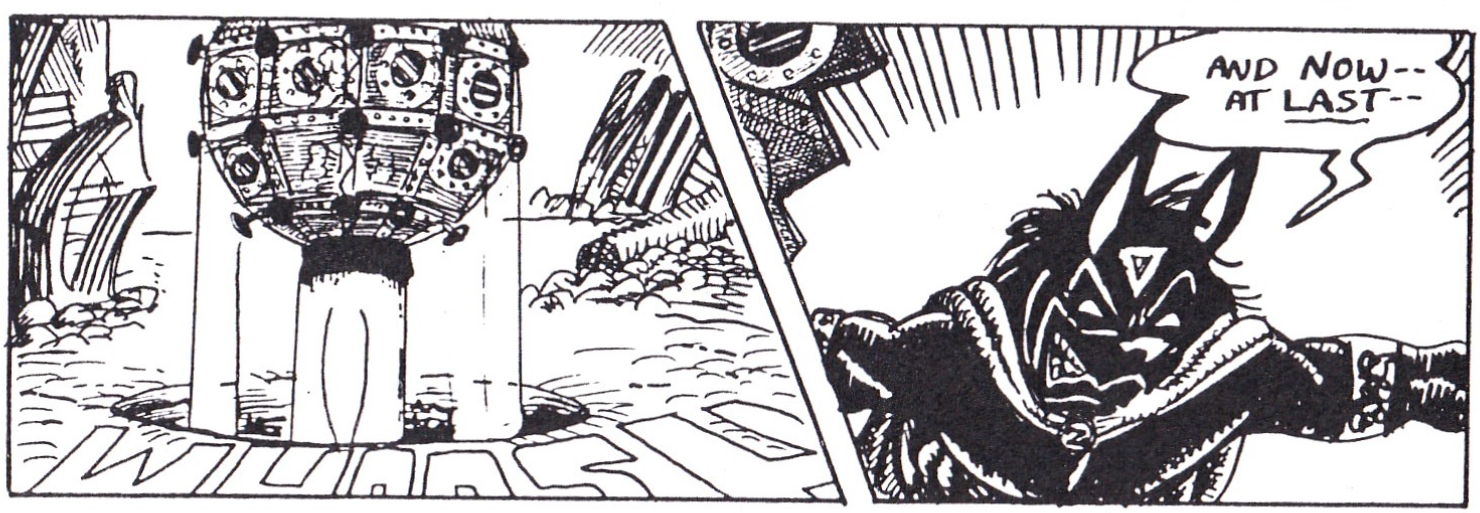

—SO I CAN CALL THE SOURCE ANYWHERE!
--YOU'RE PROBABLY WONDERING WHY I HAVENT CALLED IT ALREADY--- WELL...
NOT ME, SIRE--!
--I WANT TO SAVOR THE MOMENT-- SAVOR AND RELISH THE MOMENT...
--WHEN I CRUSH THE AGHARTANS!
--SIRE--! IF WE ALL GO WITH YOU, THE FORTRESS WILL BE VIRTUALLY UNGUARDED--!

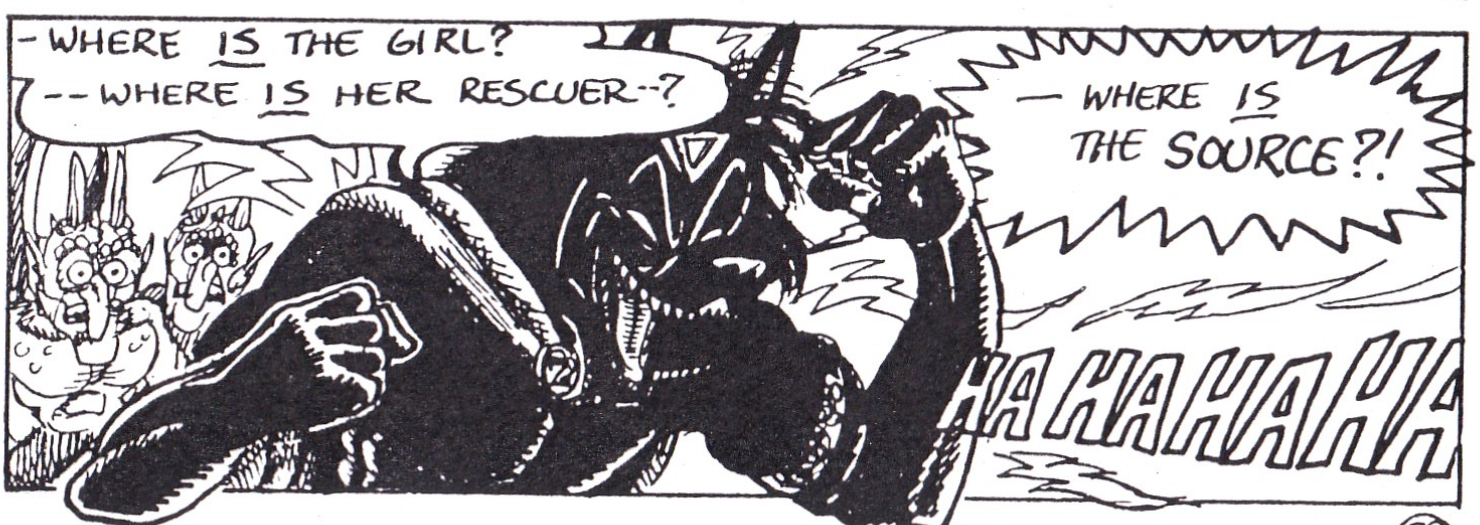

--LIKE YOU BOOTS ARE SUCH TERRIFIC GUARDS--!
—THAT INFURIATING WALTER KITTY WALKED RIGHT INTO MY FORTRESS TWICE--!
—YOU WORMS ARE INCOMPETENT FOOLS!
BUT REALLY, I'M NOT WORRIED... THE FORCE FIELD SURROUNDING MY SOURCE CONTROLLER IS VIRTUALLY IMPENETRABLE...

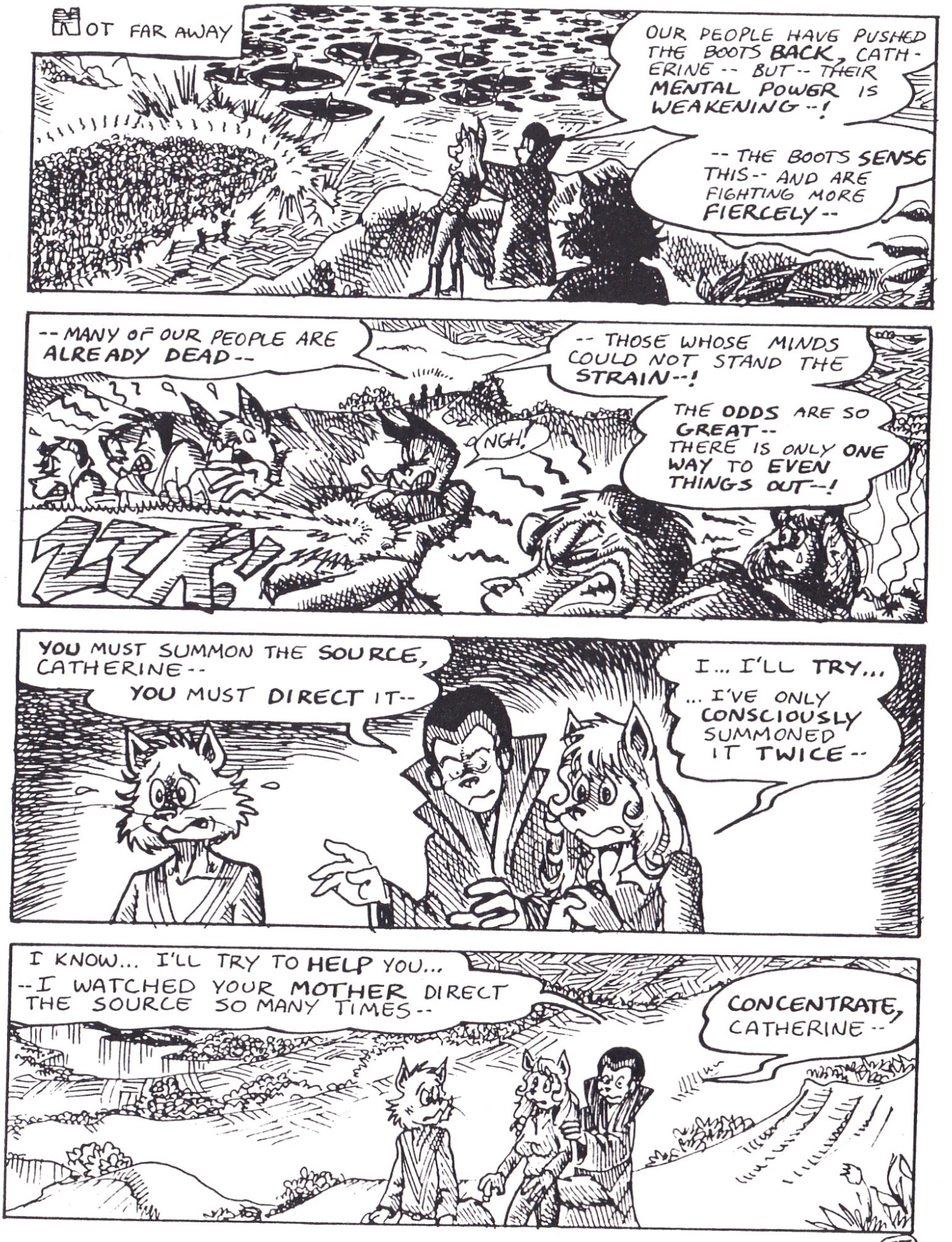

... AND THE AGHARTAN'S PACIFISTIC MINDS HAVEN'T THE ABILITY TO CONCEIVE OF ADVANCED WEAPONRY...
--AND EVEN IF THEY DID-- THEY HAVE NO WAY OF KNOWING WHERE MY MACHINE IS-- MUCH LESS HOW TO DESTROY IT--!

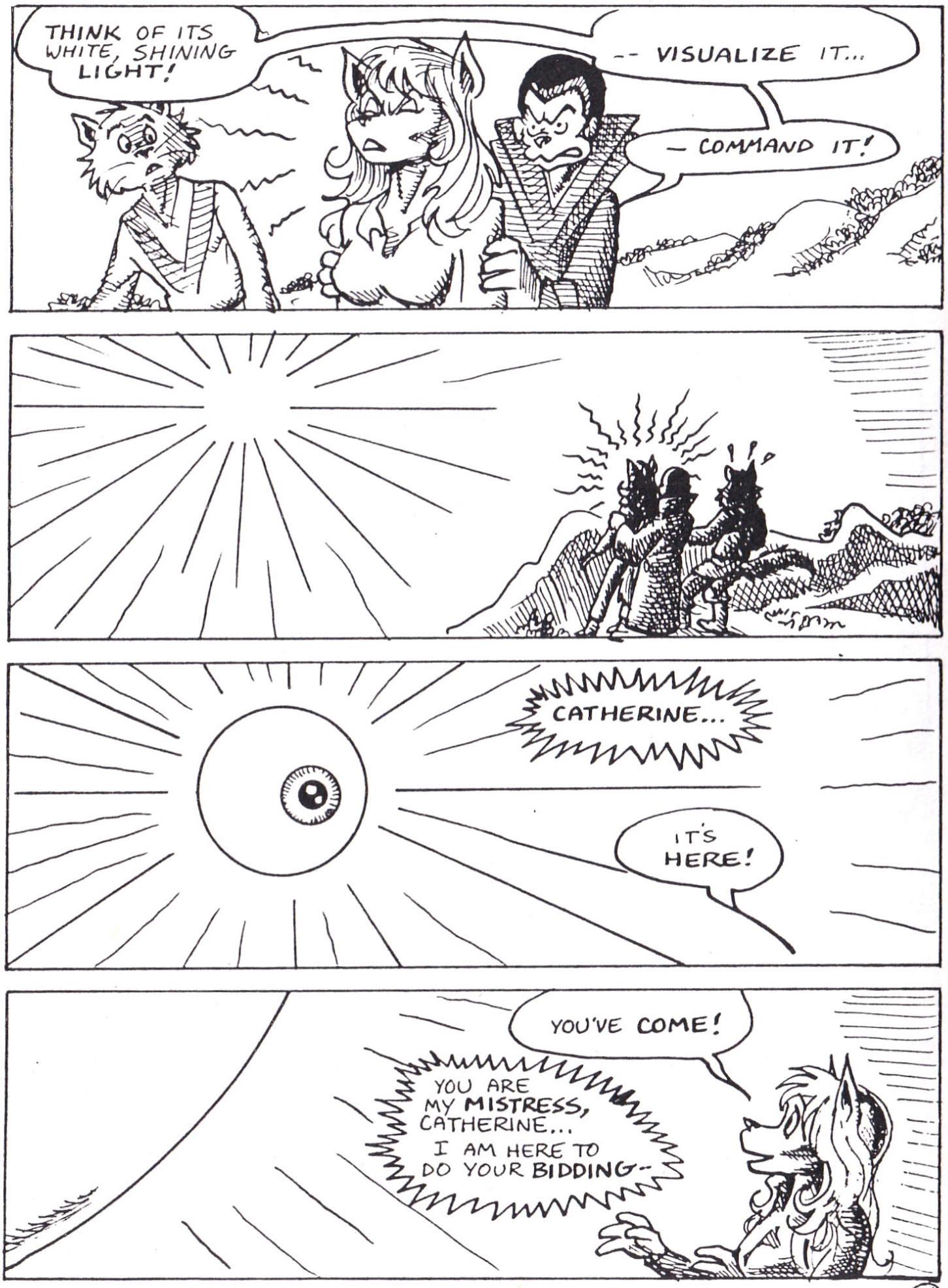

So...
SINCE THE TUNNEL TO AGHARTA HAS BEEN DRILLED -- IT WILL TAKE US EVEN LESS TIME TO GET THERE...
ZHUM!

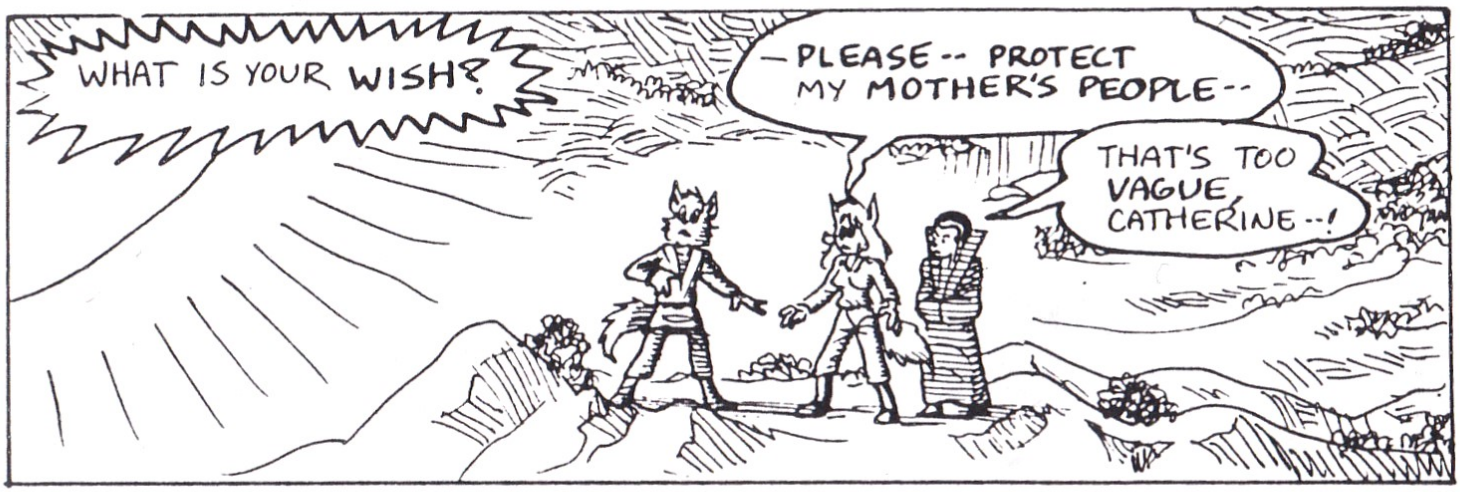

JUST IN TIME TO CRUSH THE FOOLS WHO HAVE THWARTED ME FOR TOO LONG!!
--DENYING ME MY PRIZE--MY DESTINY--

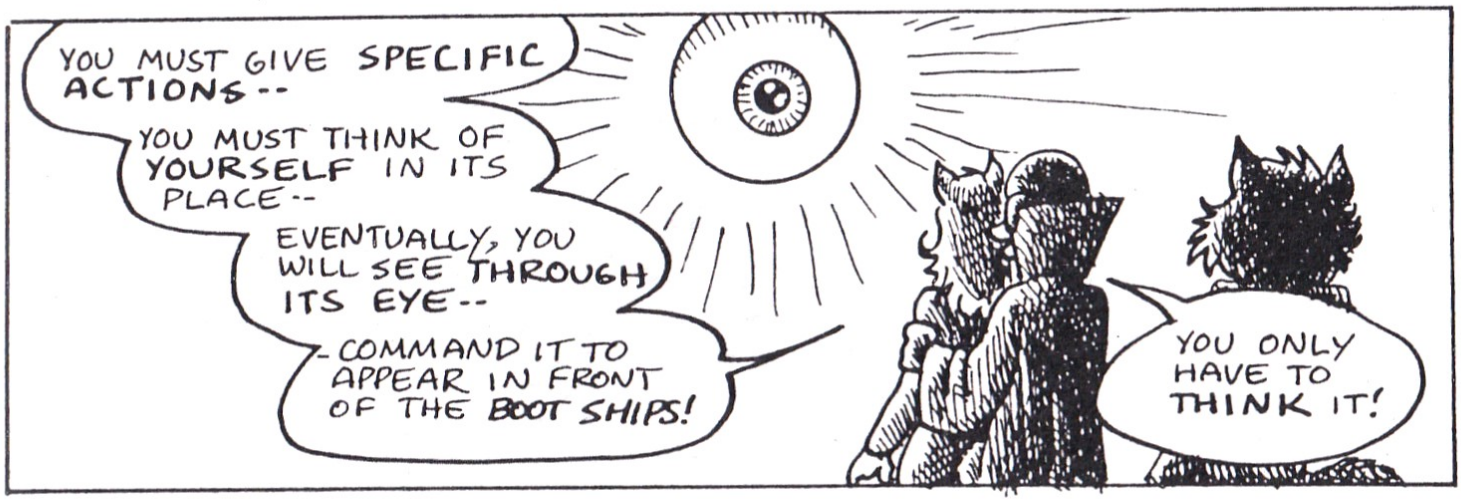

AND NOW-- AT LAST--


-WHERE IS THE GIRL?
--WHERE IS HER RESCUER--?
-- WHERE IS THE SOURCE?!
HAHAHAHAHA

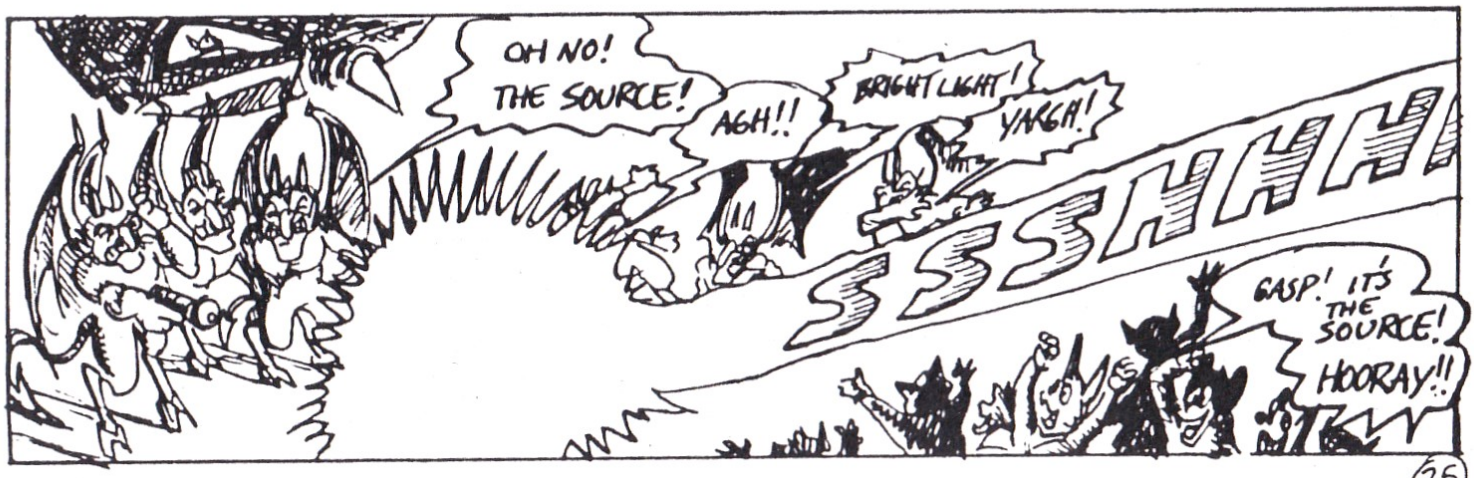

NOT FAR AWAY
OUR PEOPLE HAVE PUSHED THE BOOTS BACK, CATHERINE -- BUT -- THEIR MENTAL POWER IS WEAKENING --!
-- THE BOOTS SENSE THIS -- AND ARE FIGHTING MORE FIERCELY --
-- MANY OF OUR PEOPLE ARE ALREADY DEAD --
-- THOSE WHOSE MINDS COULD NOT STAND THE STRAIN --!
NGH!
THE ODDS ARE SO GREAT -- THERE IS ONLY ONE WAY TO EVEN THINGS OUT --!
YOU MUST SUMMON THE SOURCE, CATHERINE --
YOU MUST DIRECT IT --
I... I'LL TRY...
... I'VE ONLY CONSCIOUSLY SUMMONED IT TWICE --
I KNOW... I'LL TRY TO HELP YOU...
-- I WATCHED YOUR MOTHER DIRECT THE SOURCE SO MANY TIMES --
CONCENTRATE, CATHERINE --

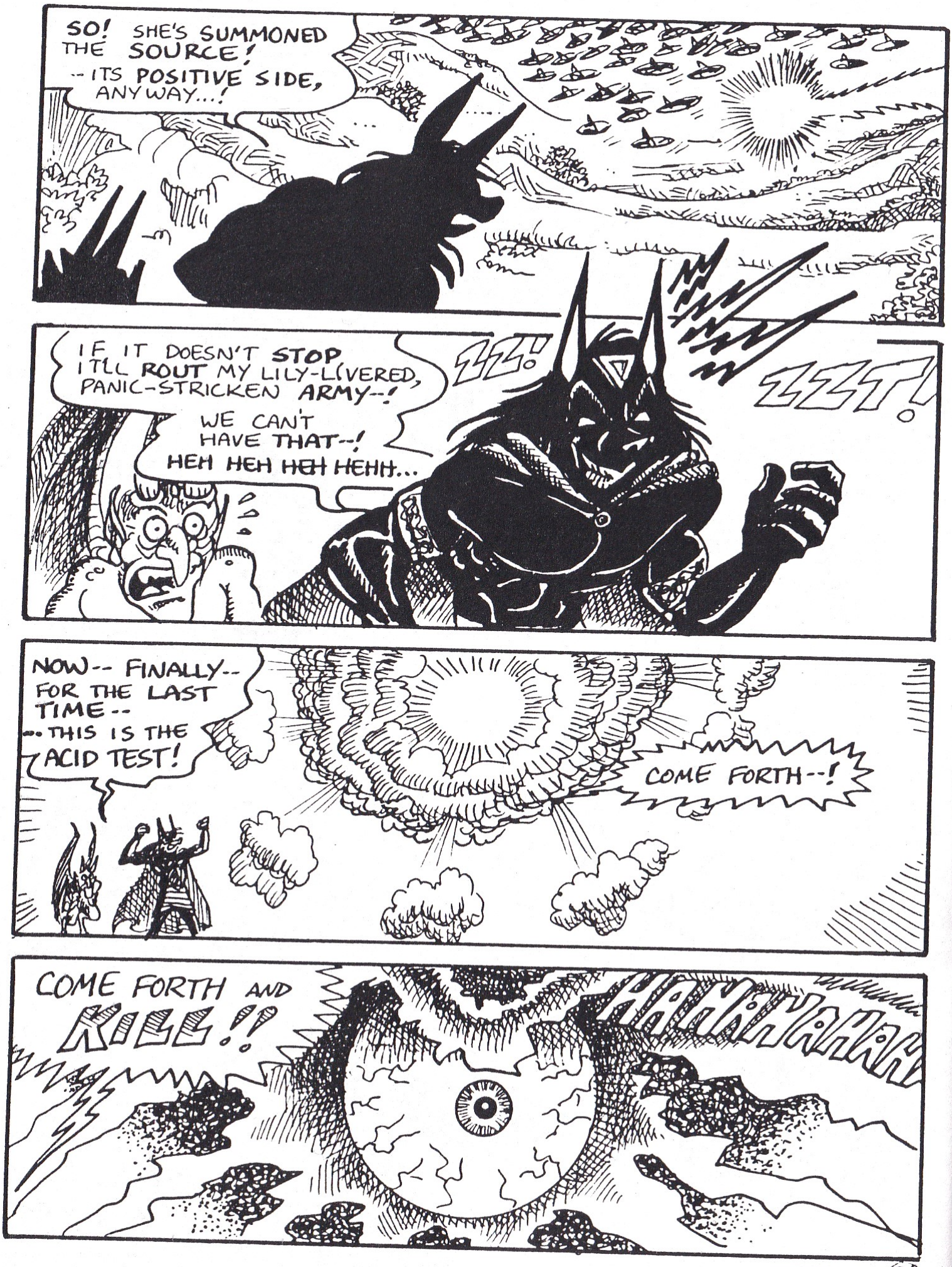

THINK OF ITS WHITE, SHINING LIGHT!
-- VISUALIZE IT...
— COMMAND IT!
CATHERINE...
IT'S HERE!
YOU'VE COME!
YOU ARE MY MISTRESS, CATHERINE... I AM HERE TO DO YOUR BIDDING--

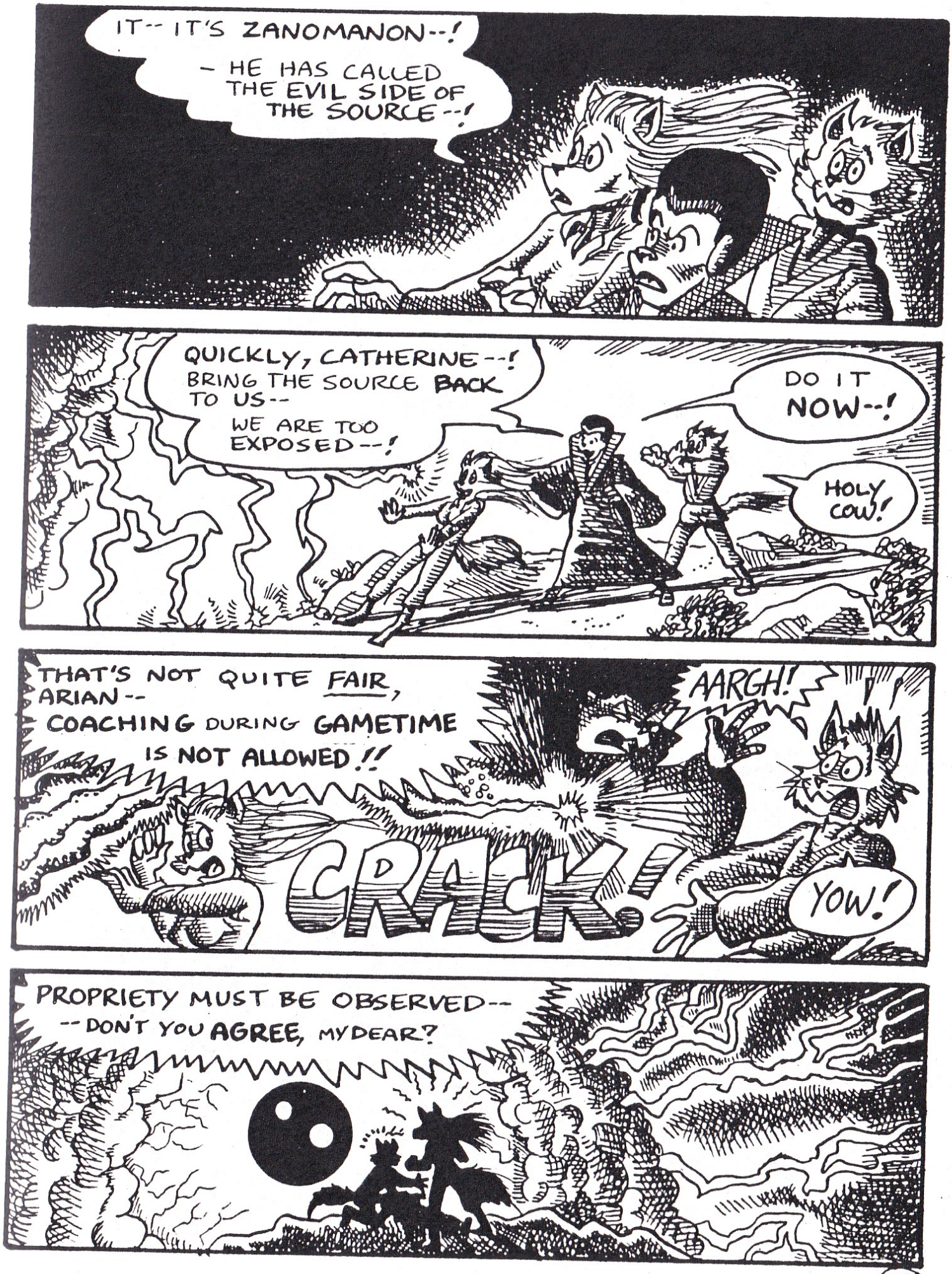

WHAT IS YOUR WISH?
—PLEASE -- PROTECT MY MOTHER'S PEOPLE--
THAT'S TOO VAGUE, CATHERINE--!

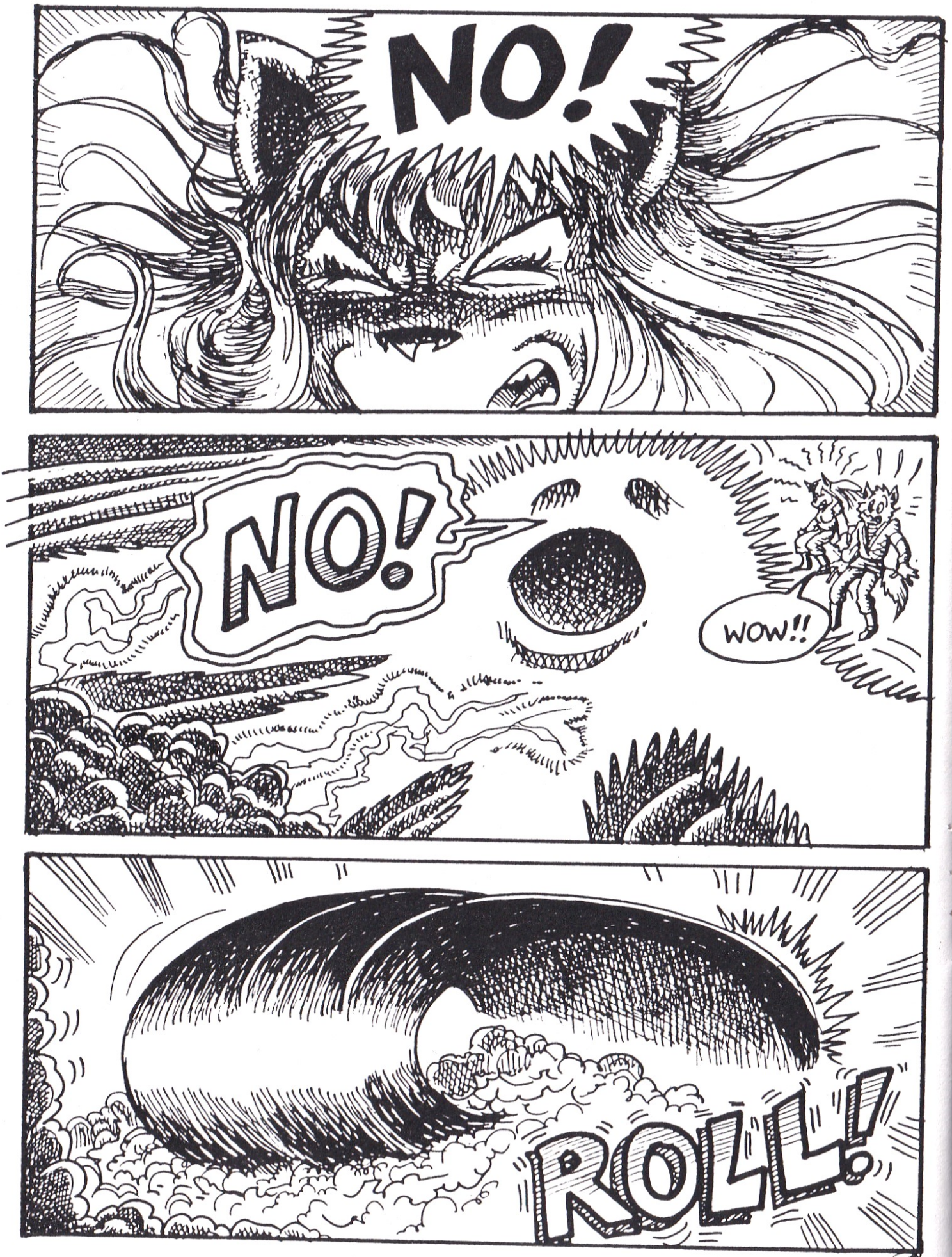

YOU MUST GIVE SPECIFIC ACTIONS--
YOU MUST THINK OF YOURSELF IN ITS PLACE--
EVENTUALLY, YOU WILL SEE THROUGH ITS EYE--
-COMMAND IT TO APPEAR IN FRONT OF THE BOOT SHIPS!
YOU ONLY HAVE TO THINK IT!

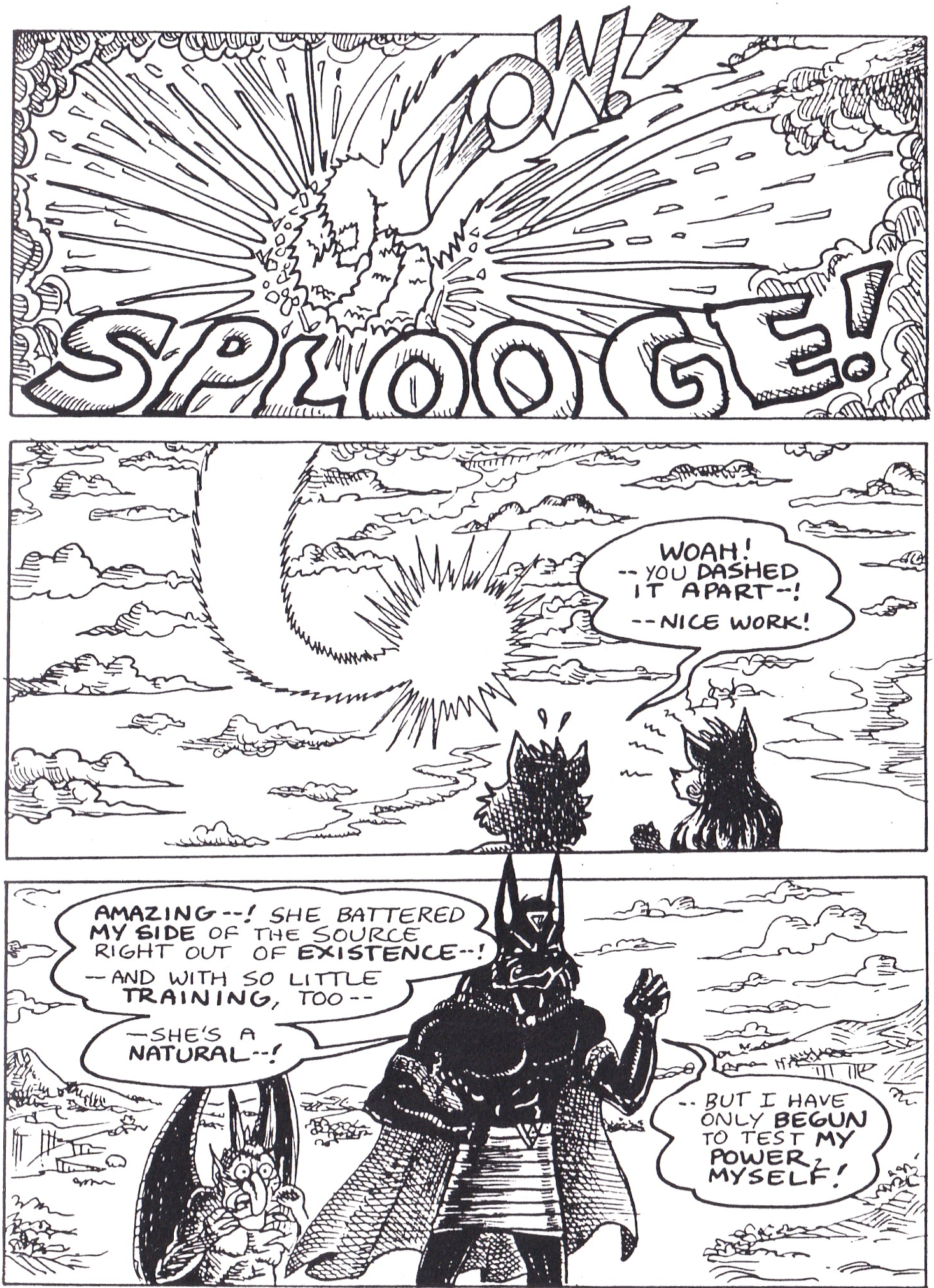
SHOOSH!
WHEW!

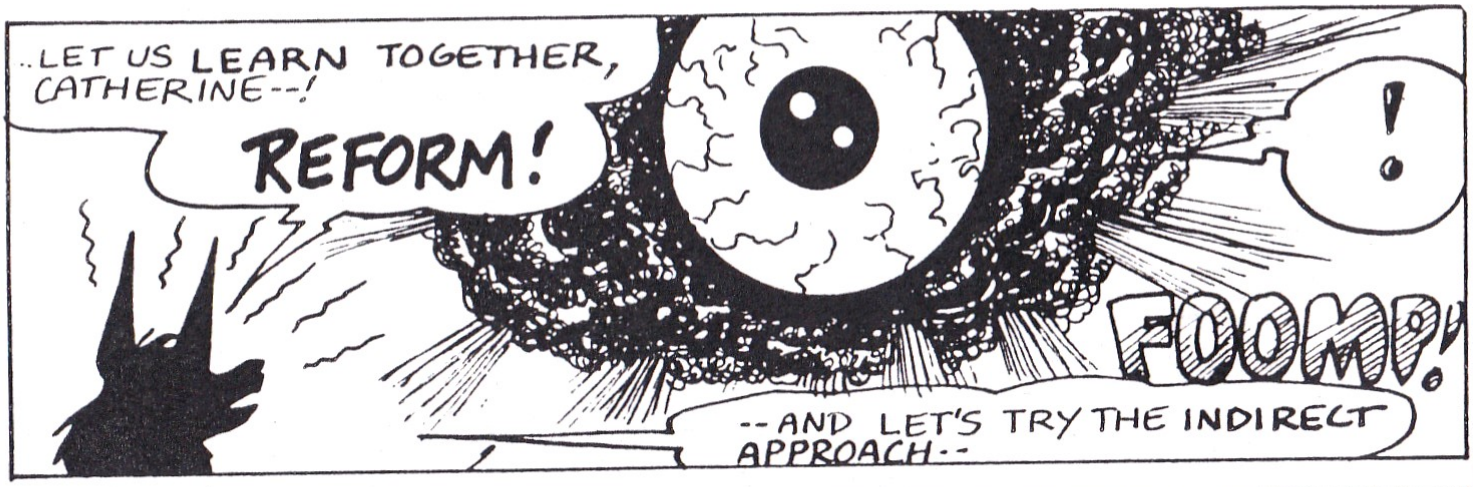

OH NO! THE SOURCE!
AGH!!
BRIGHT LIGHT!
YAAGH!
SSSHHH!
GASP! IT'S THE SOURCE! HOORAY!!

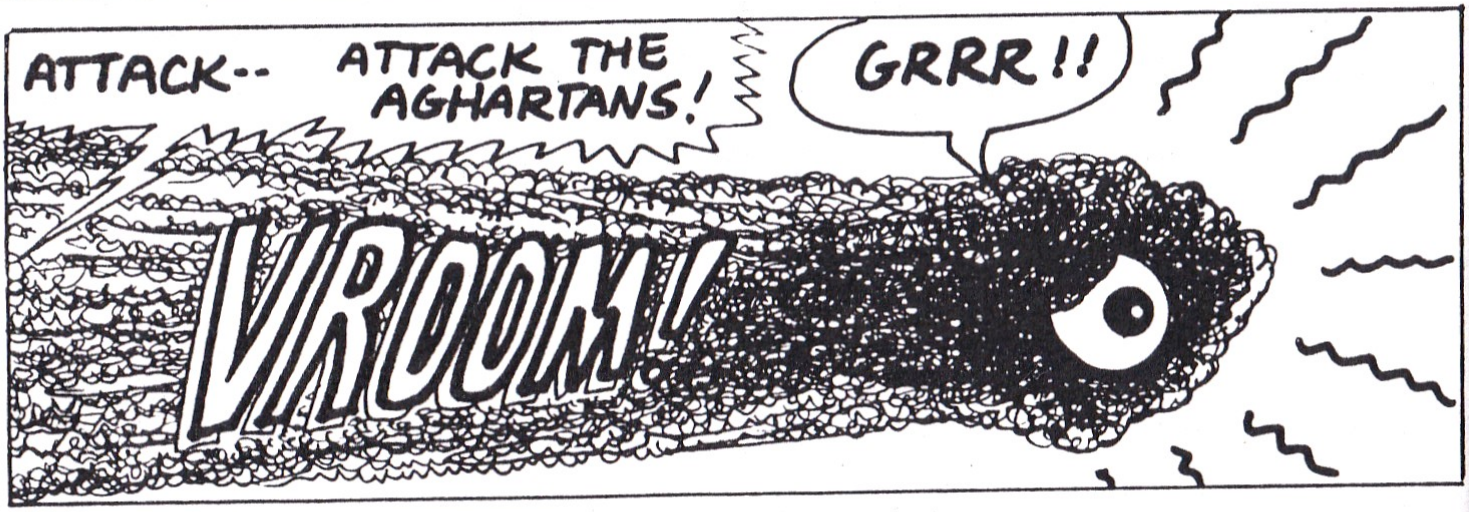

SO! SHE'S SUMMONED THE SOURCE! --ITS POSITIVE SIDE, ANYWAY...!
IF IT DOESN'T STOP I'LL ROUT MY LILY-LIVERED, PANIC-STRICKEN ARMY--!
WE CAN'T HAVE THAT--! HEH HEH HEH HEHH...
ZZZT!
ZZZT!
NOW-- FINALLY-- FOR THE LAST TIME-- --THIS IS THE ACID TEST!
COME FORTH--!
COME FORTH AND KILL!!
HAHAHAHAH

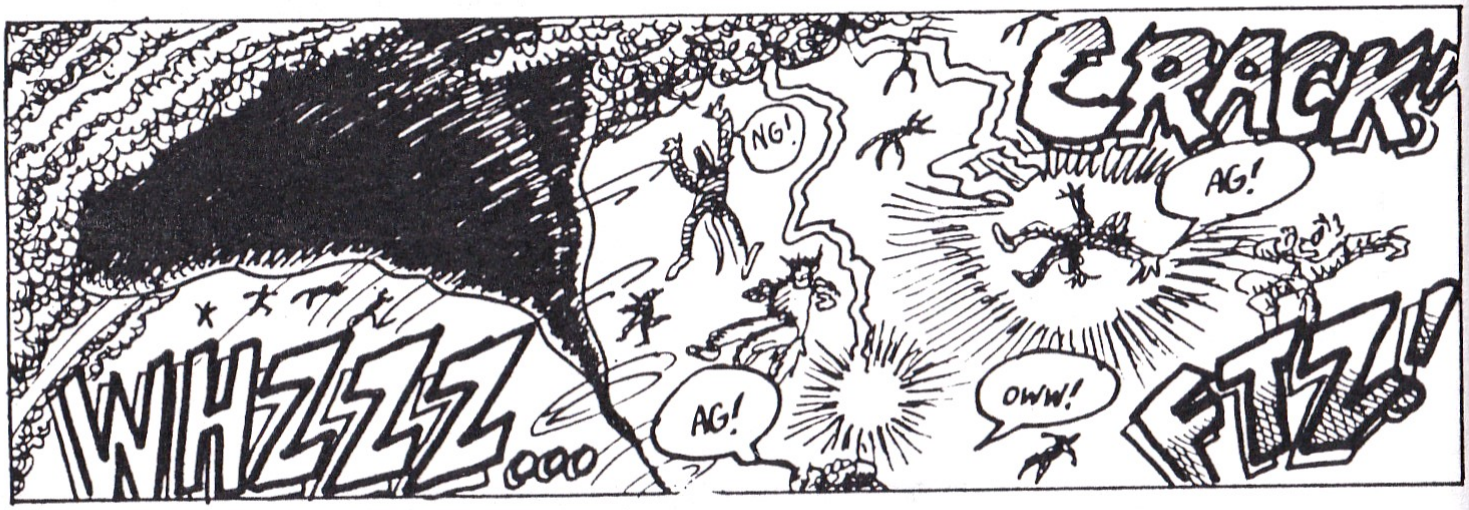

IT-- IT'S ZANOMANON--!
- HE HAS CALLED THE EVIL SIDE OF THE SOURCE--!
QUICKLY, CATHERINE--! BRING THE SOURCE BACK TO US--
WE ARE TOO EXPOSED--!
DO IT NOW--!
HOLY COW!
THAT'S NOT QUITE FAIR, ARIAN--
COACHING DURING GAMETIME IS NOT ALLOWED!!
AARGH!
CRACK!
YOW!
PROPRIETY MUST BE OBSERVED--
--DON'T YOU AGREE, MY DEAR?


NO!
NO!
WOW!!
ROLL!

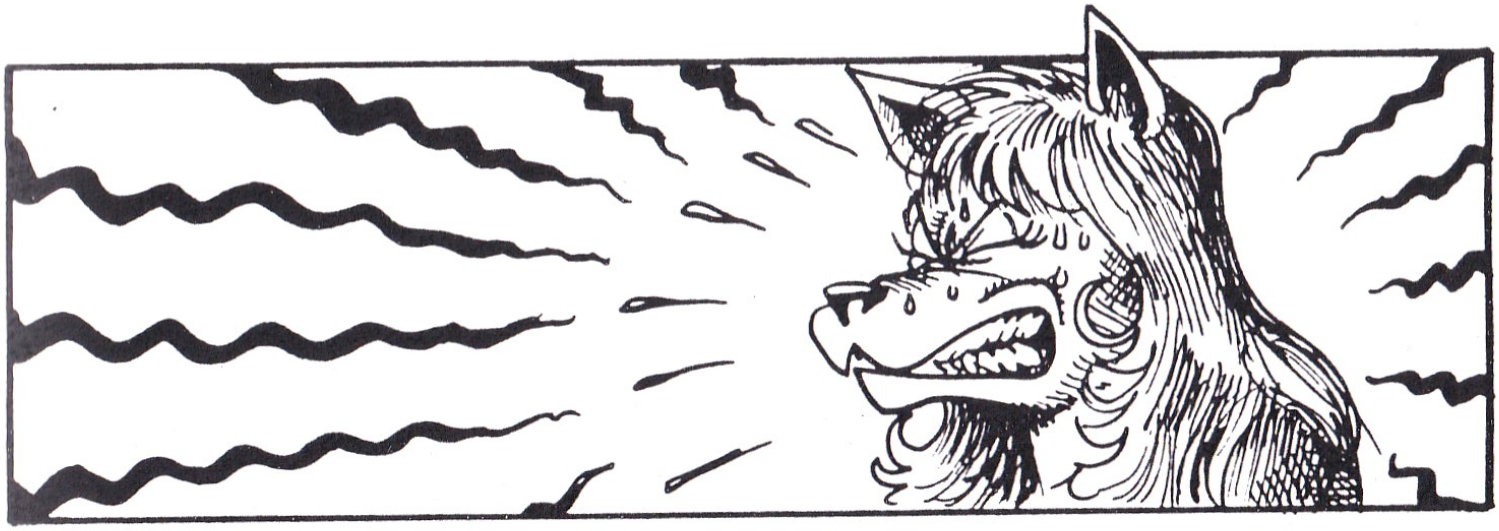

ZOW!
SPLOOGE!
WOAH! -- YOU DASHED IT APART--! --NICE WORK!
AMAZING--! SHE BATTERED MY SIDE OF THE SOURCE RIGHT OUT OF EXISTENCE--! --AND WITH SO LITTLE TRAINING, TOO--
--SHE'S A NATURAL--!
--BUT I HAVE ONLY BEGUN TO TEST MY POWER, MYSELF!

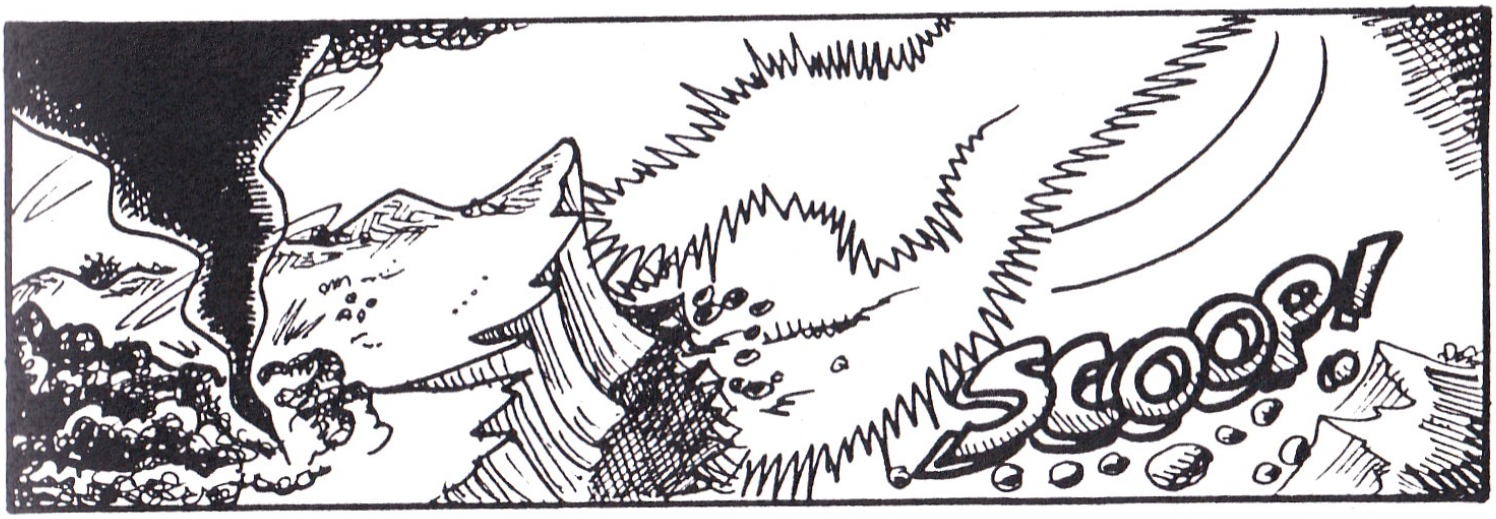

..LET US LEARN TOGETHER, CATHERINE--!
REFORM!
!
FOOMP!
--AND LET'S TRY THE INDIRECT APPROACH--

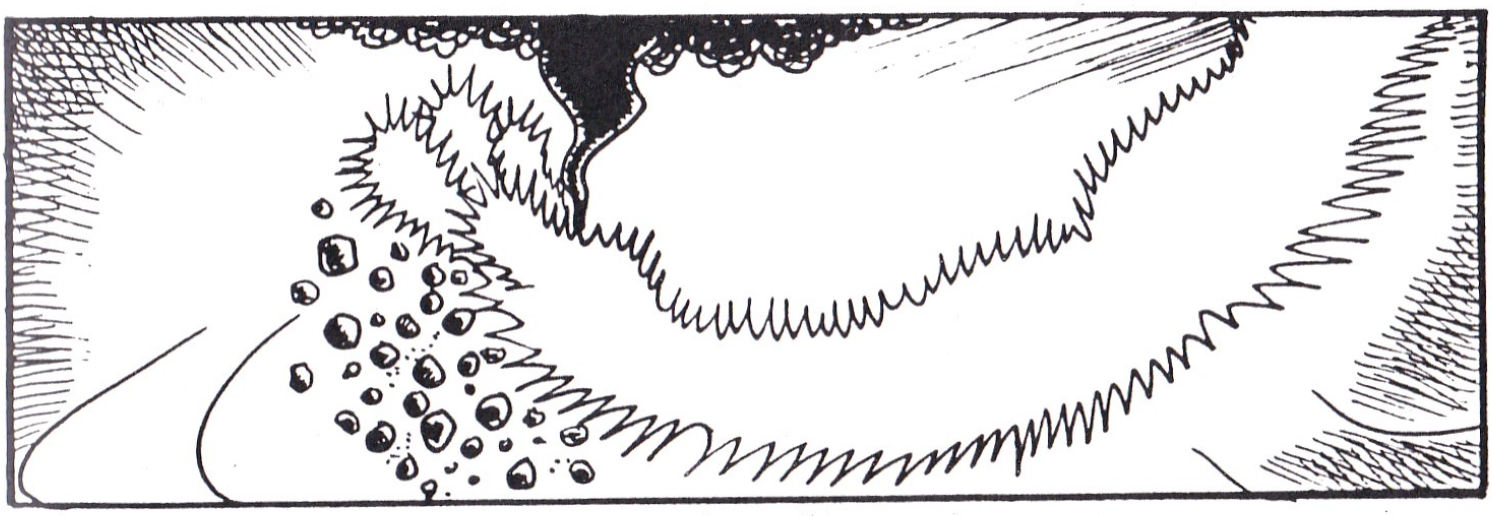

ATTACK-- ATTACK THE AGHARTANS!
GRRR!!
VROOM!

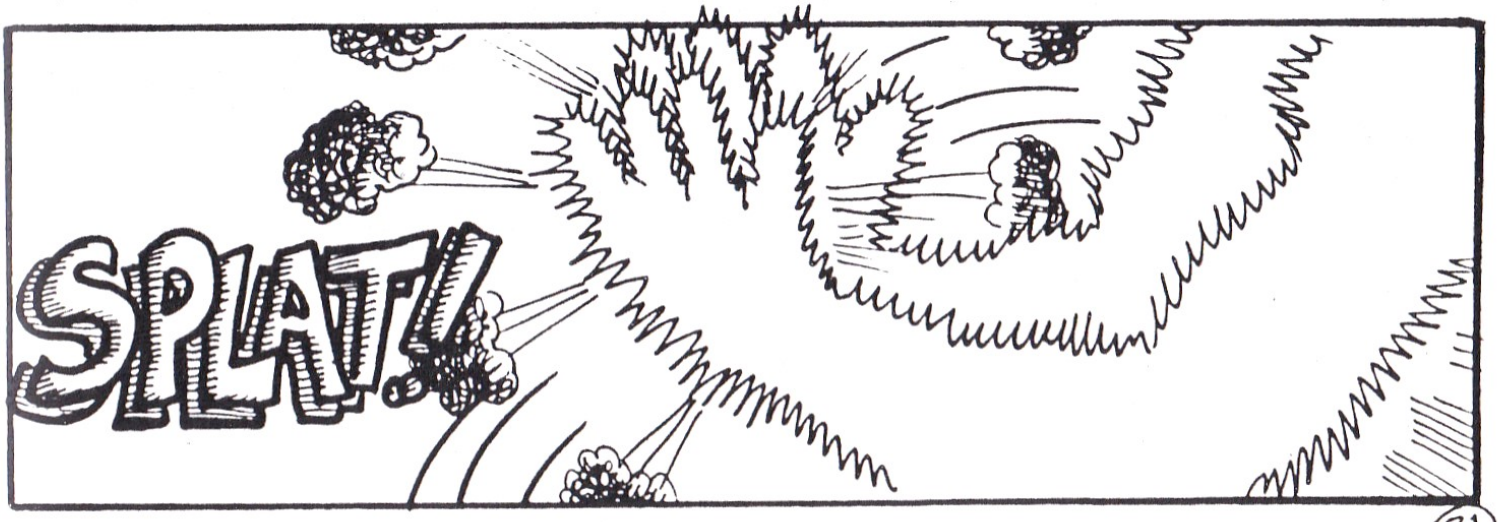

WHZZZZ
NG!
AG!
CRACK!
AG!
OWW!
FTZZ!

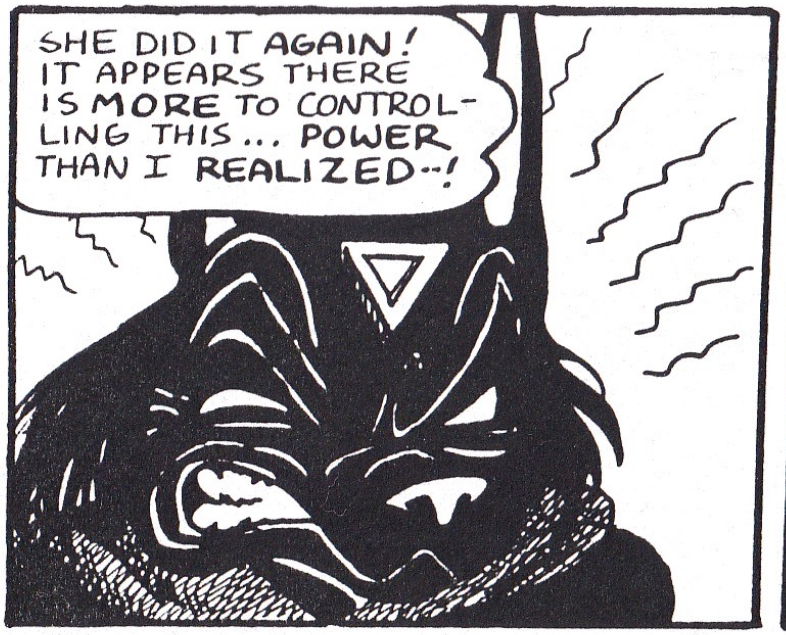
EEE!
YAA!
ARG!
AAGGHH!
OUCH!
OOHH!
ROARR!



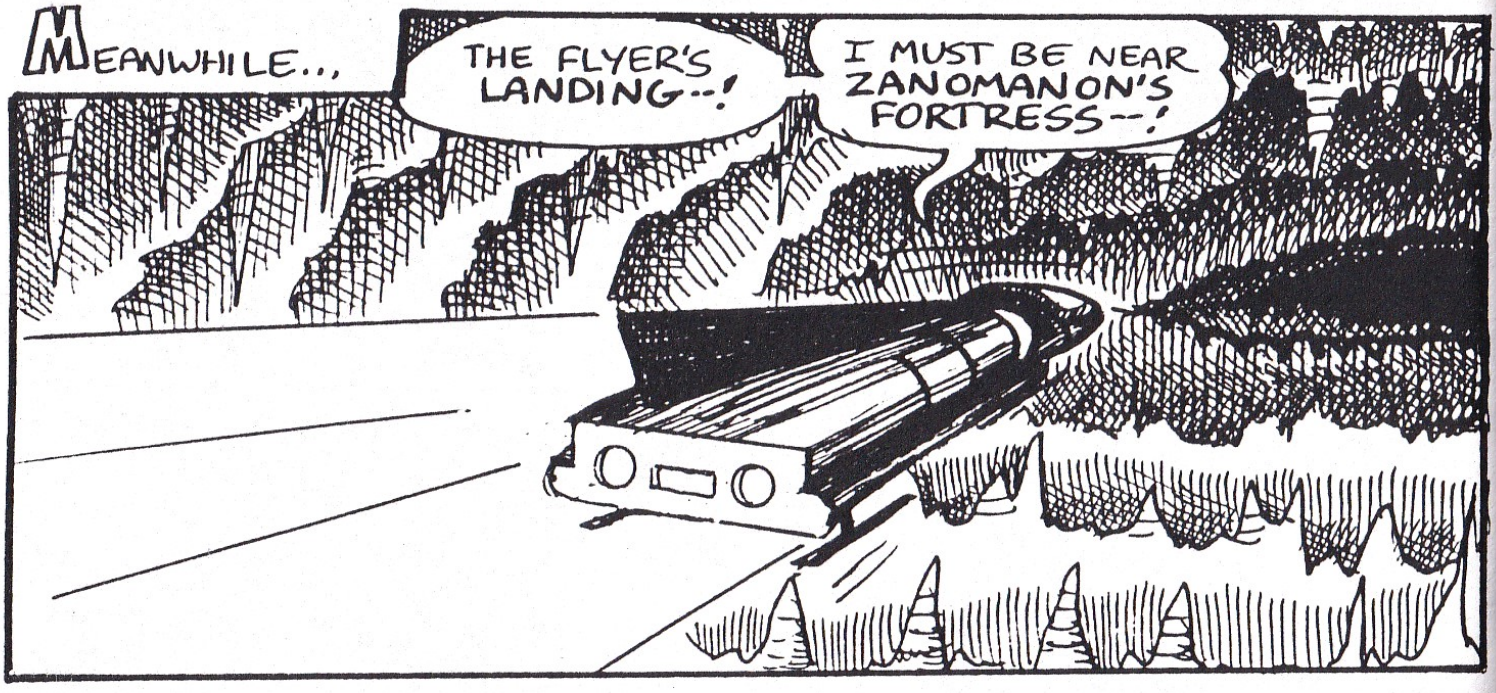

SCOOP!



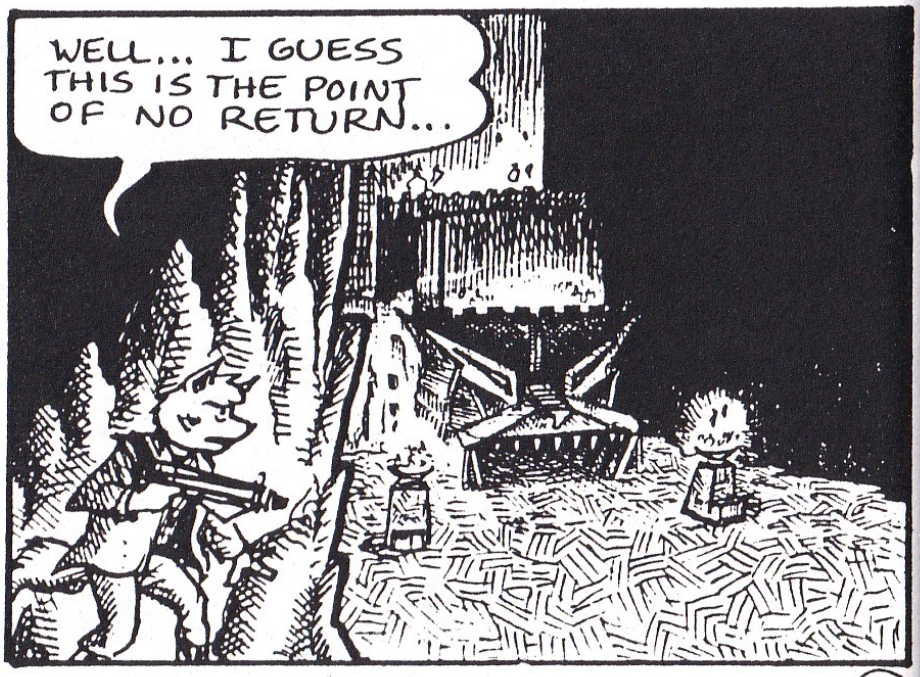

SPLAT!

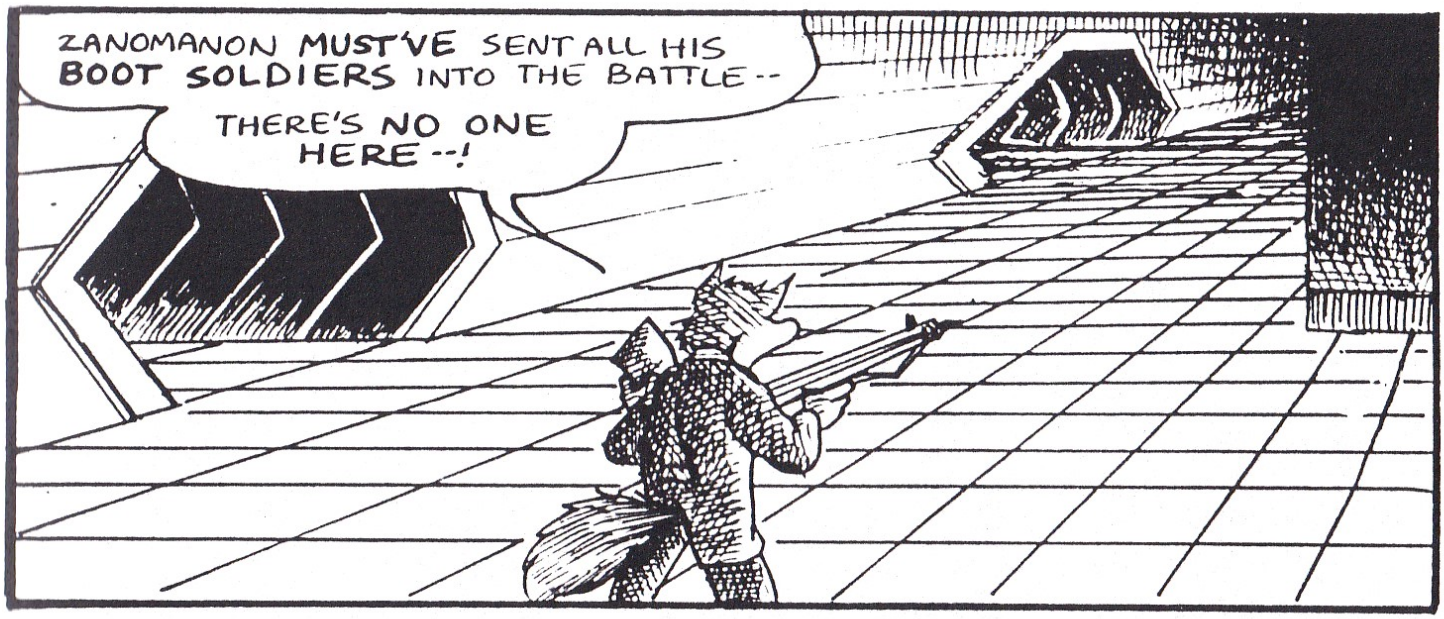

SHE DID IT AGAIN! IT APPEARS THERE IS MORE TO CONTROLLING THIS... POWER THAN I REALIZED--!

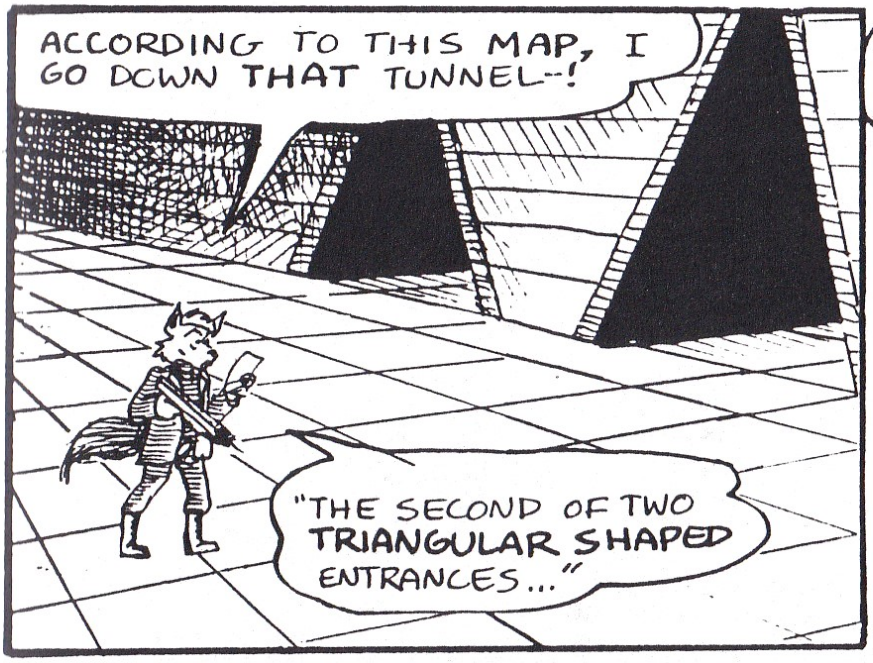
I MUST REEVALUATE MY STRATEGY--! - REFORM!
FOOMP
!


MEANWHILE...
THE FLYER'S LANDING--!
I MUST BE NEAR ZANOMANON'S FORTRESS--!

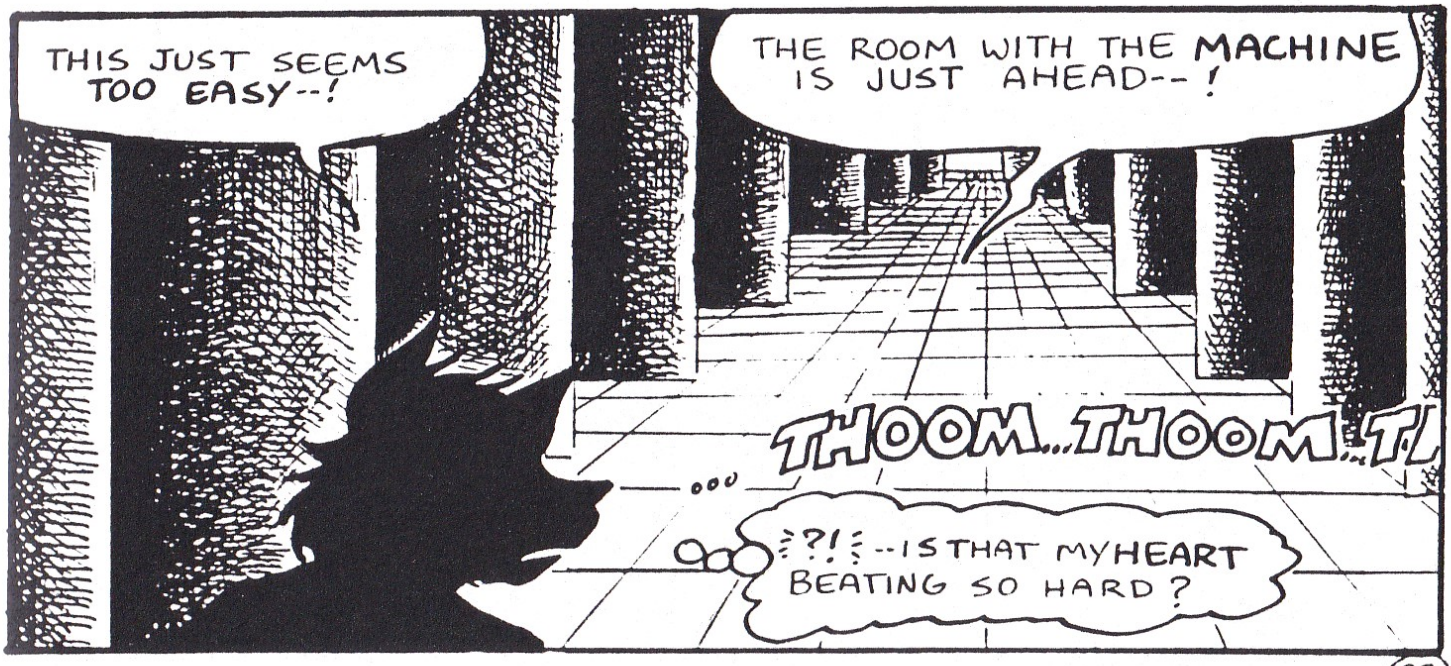
ACCORDING TO DENNIS, IT'S THAT WAY--!

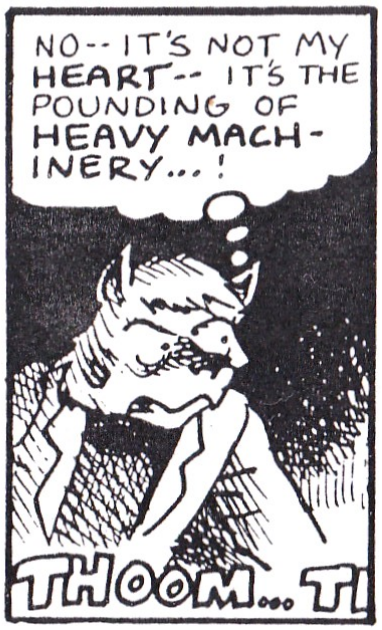

WELL... I GUESS THIS IS THE POINT OF NO RETURN...

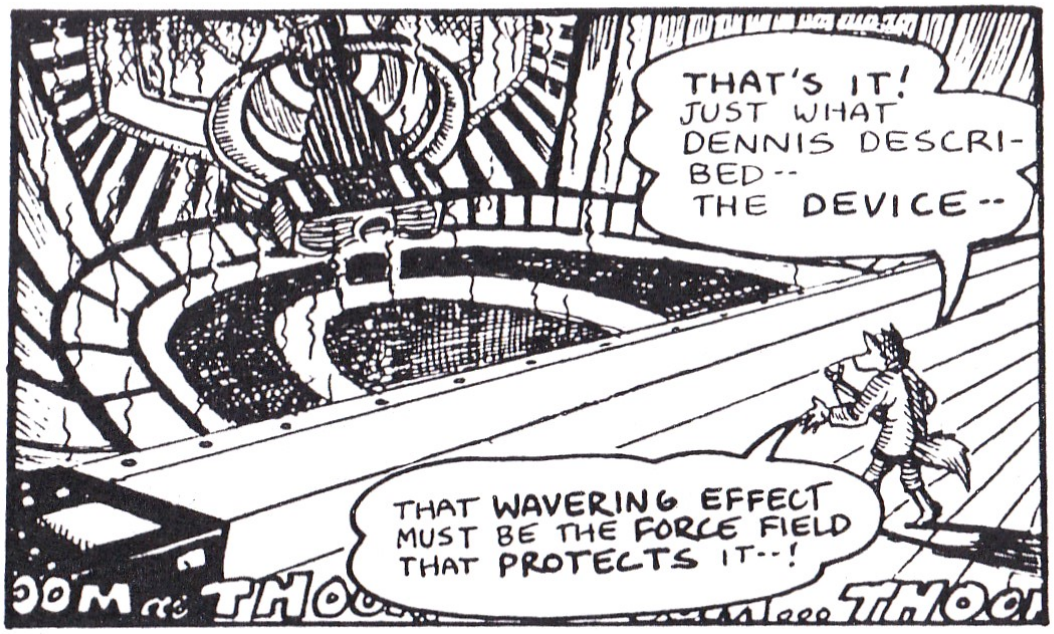

ZANOMANON MUST'VE SENT ALL HIS BOOT SOLDIERS INTO THE BATTLE--
THERE'S NO ONE HERE--!

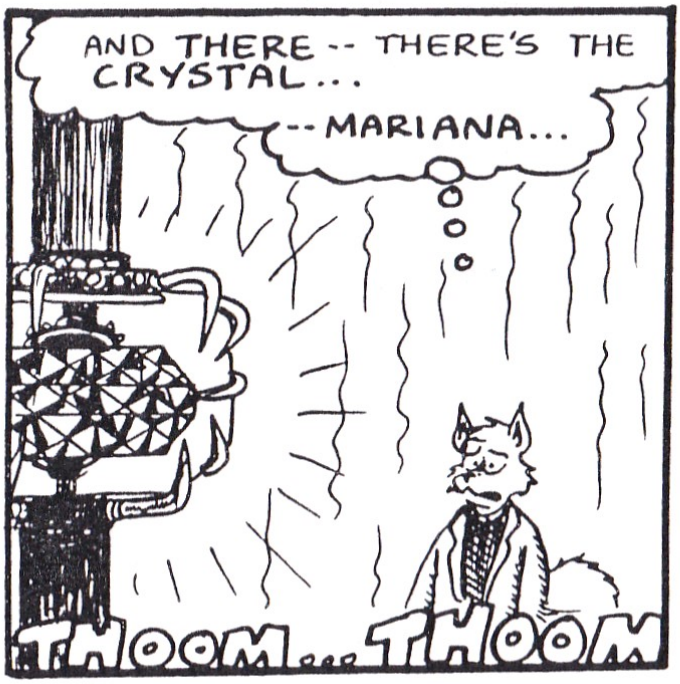

ACCORDING TO THIS MAP, I GO DOWN THAT TUNNEL--!
"THE SECOND OF TWO TRIANGULAR SHAPED ENTRANCES..."

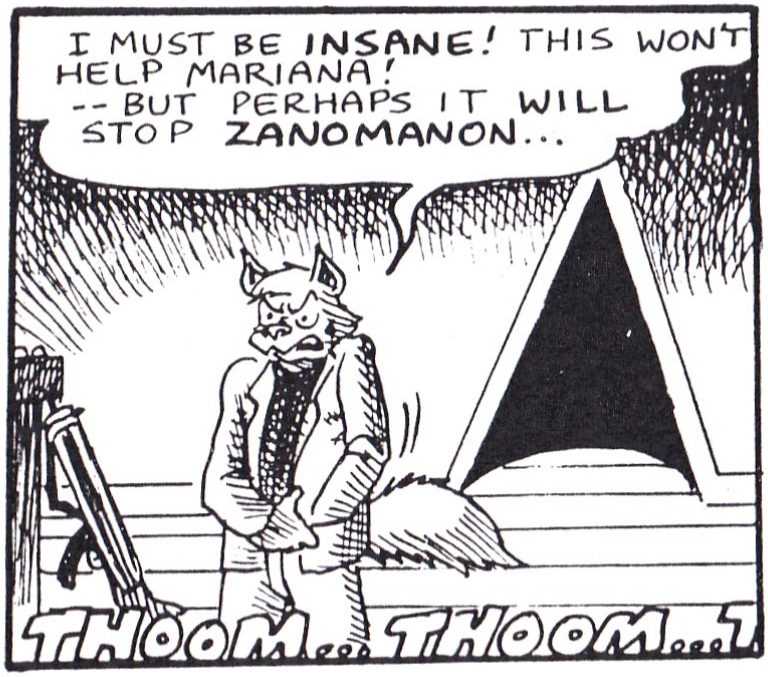
—WHAT WAS THAT? -- SOUNDED LIKE SOMETHING BEHIND ME--!
--NOTHING! I MUST BE IMAGINING THINGS...


THIS JUST SEEMS TOO EASY--!
THE ROOM WITH THE MACHINE IS JUST AHEAD--!
THOOM...THOOM...T
?! --IS THAT MY HEART BEATING SO HARD?

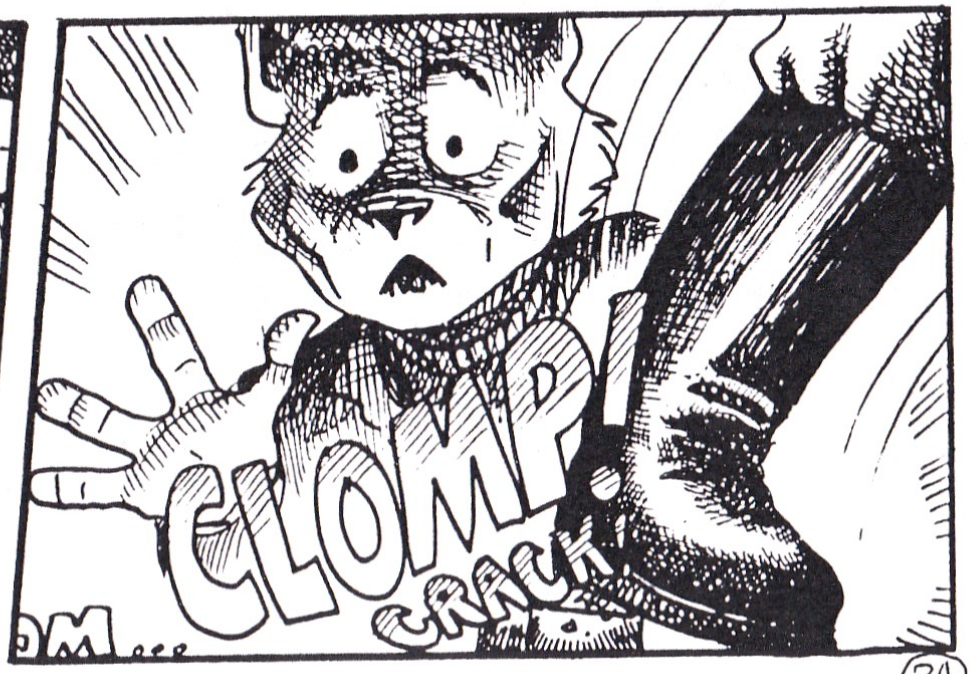

NO-- IT'S NOT MY HEART-- IT'S THE POUNDING OF HEAVY MACHINERY...!
THOOM... TI

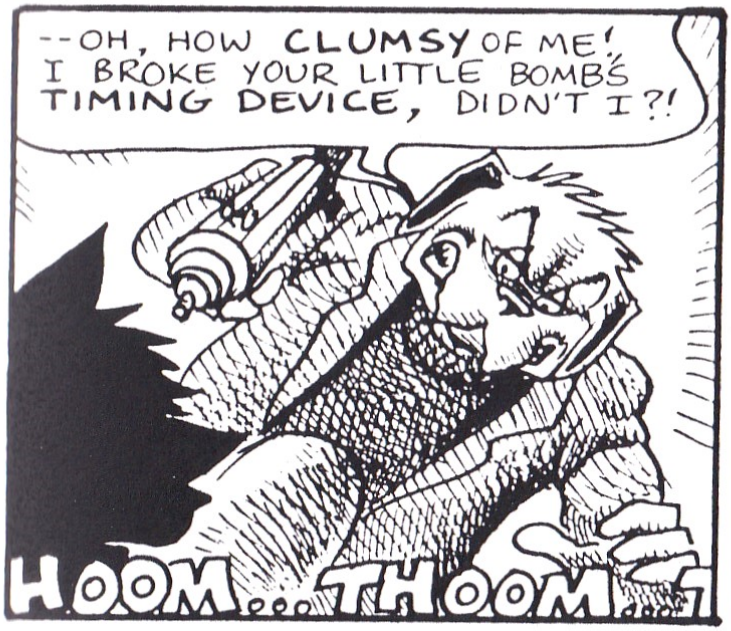

THAT'S IT! JUST WHAT DENNIS DESCRIBED-- THE DEVICE--
THAT WAVERING EFFECT MUST BE THE FORCE FIELD THAT PROTECTS IT--!
OOM... THOO... THOO

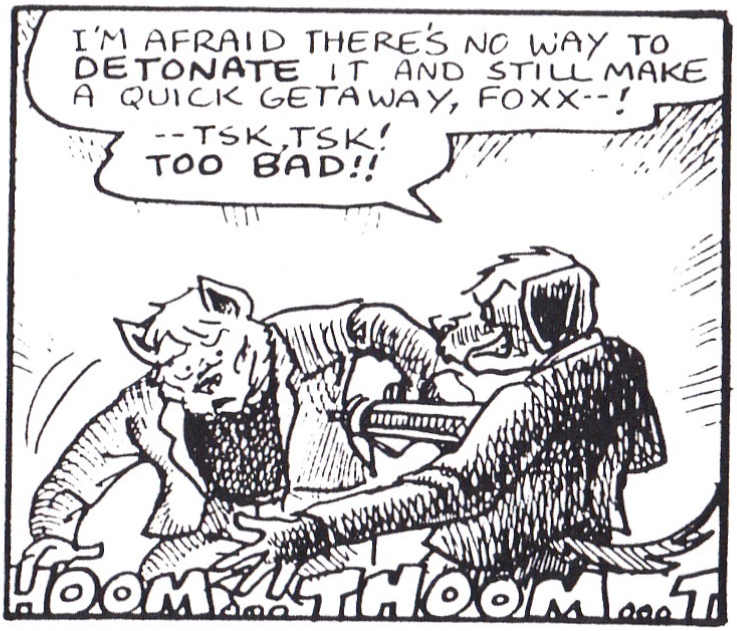

AND THERE -- THERE'S THE CRYSTAL...
--MARIANA...
THOOM... THOOM

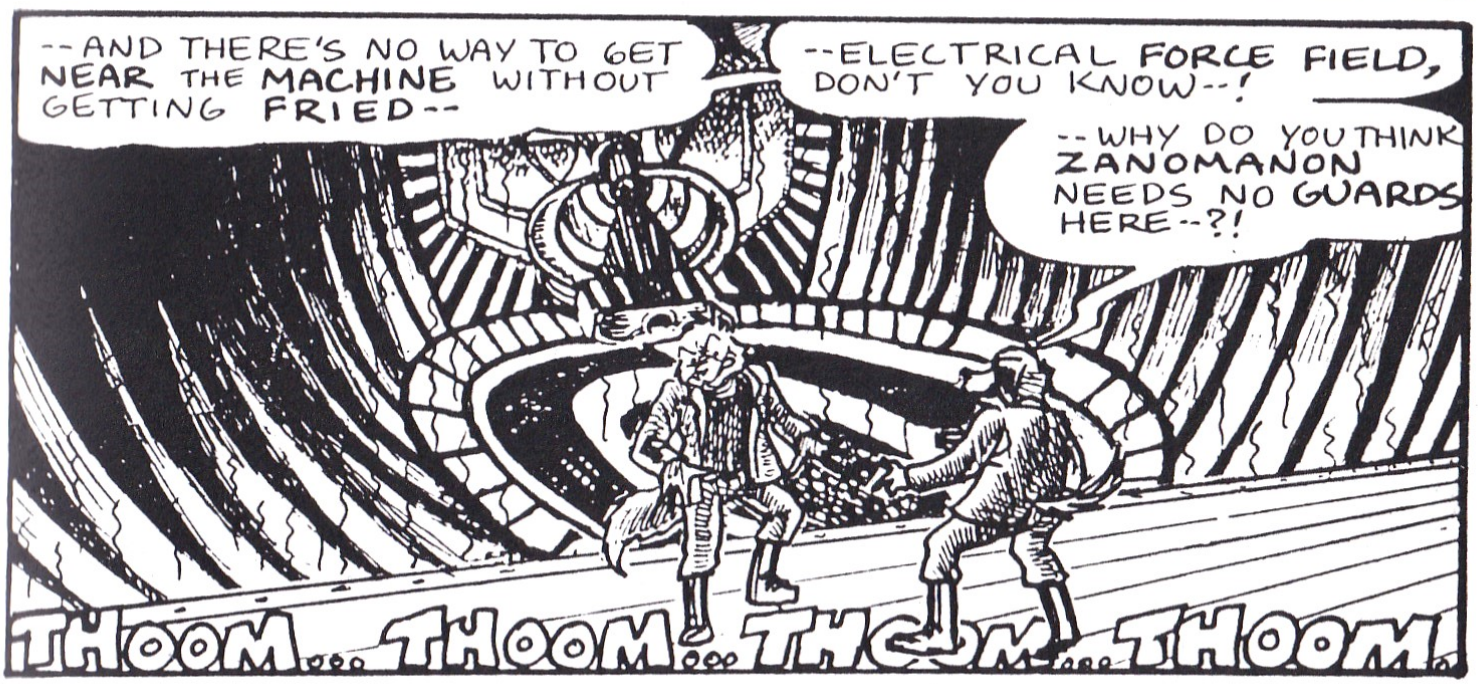

I MUST BE INSANE! THIS WON'T HELP MARIANA! --BUT PERHAPS IT WILL STOP ZANOMANON...
THOOM... THOOM...

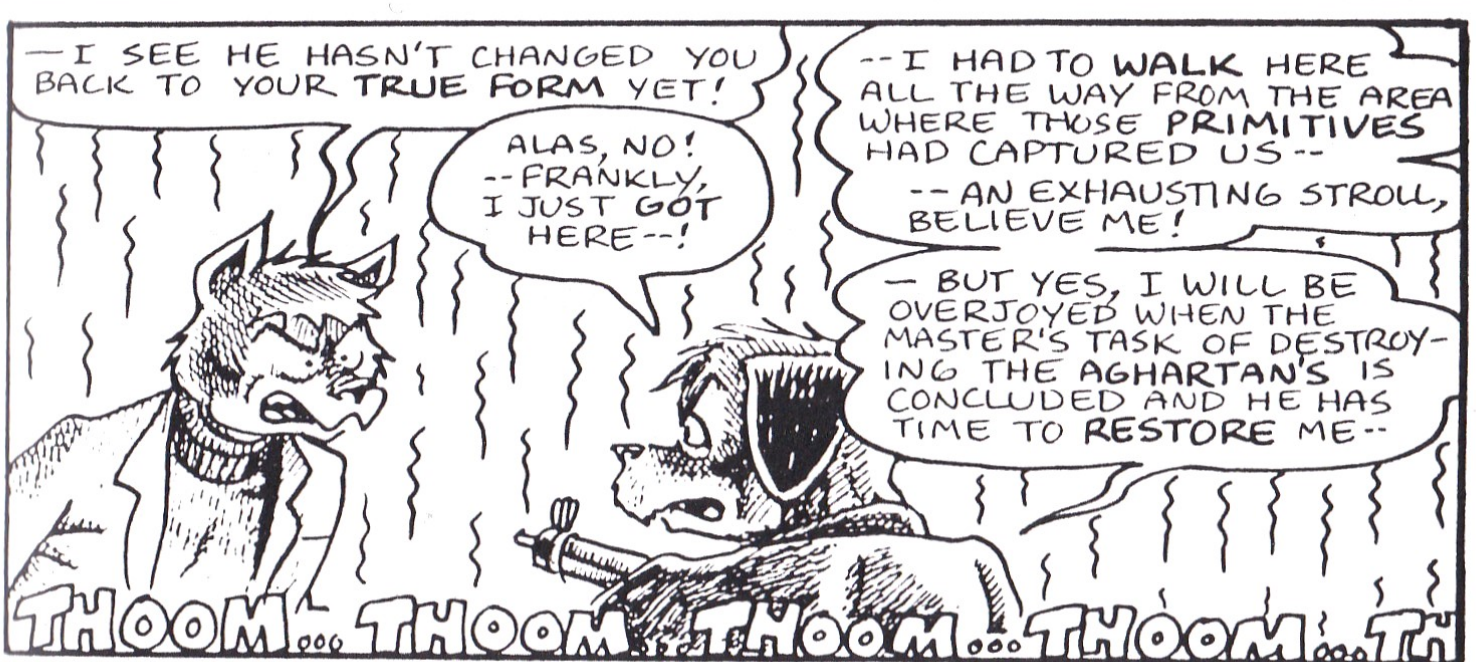
LET'S SEE... DENNIS SAID TO JUST SET THE TIMER AND THEN GET OUT QUICK--
THOOM... THO

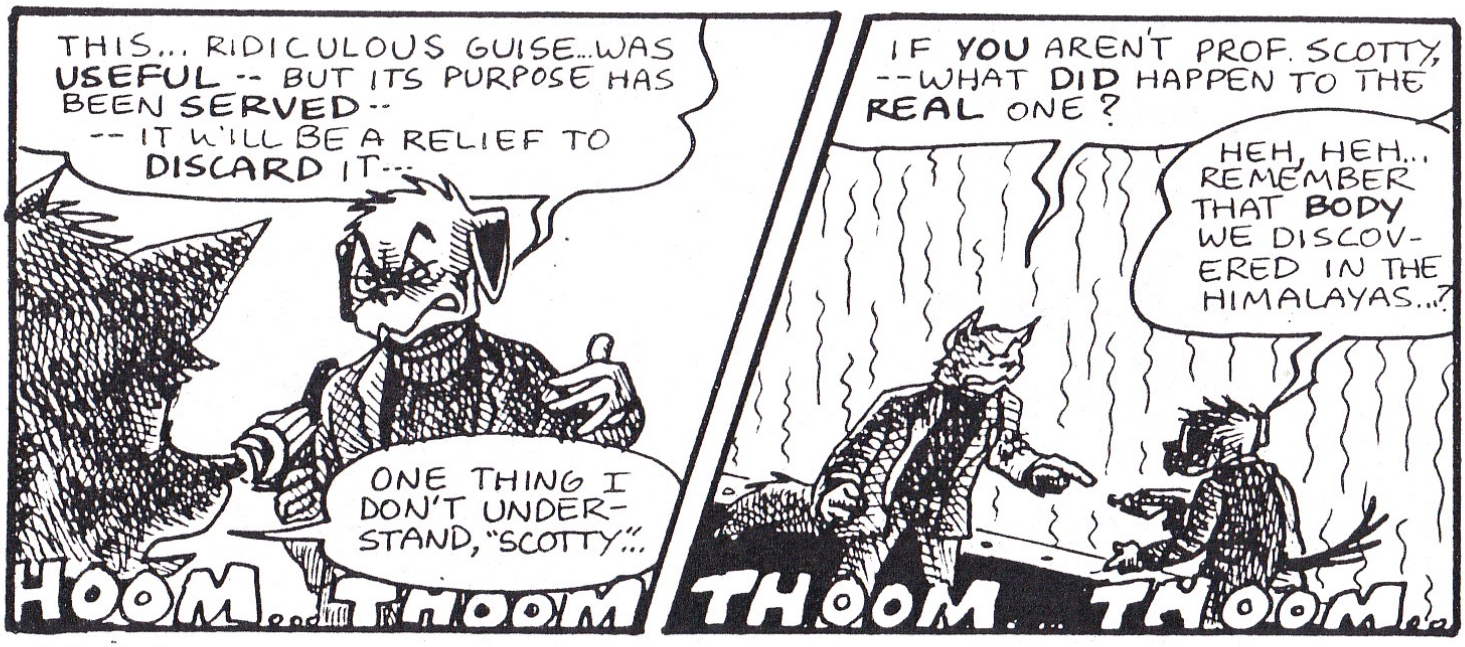

CLOMP!
CRACK!
OM...

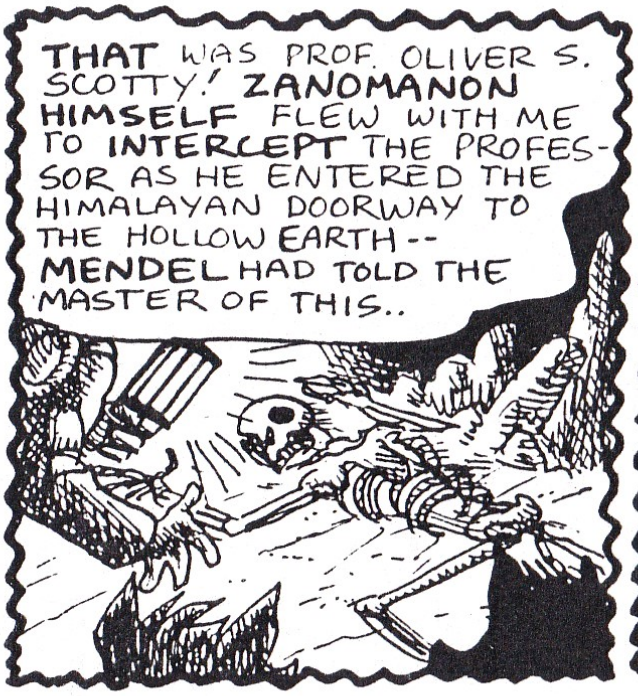

--OH, HOW CLUMSY OF ME! I BROKE YOUR LITTLE BOMB'S TIMING DEVICE, DIDN'T I?!
HOOM... THOOM...

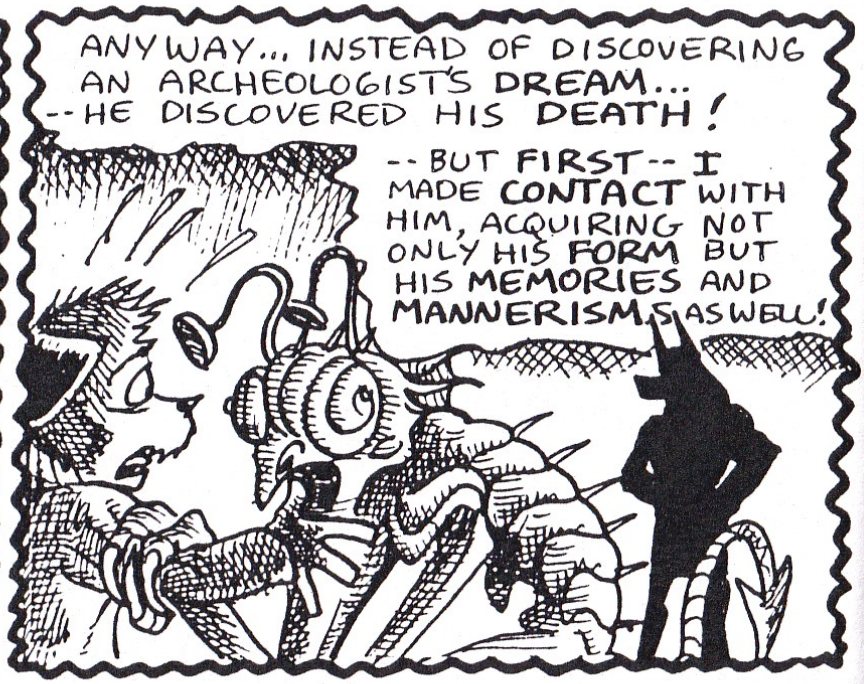

I'M AFRAID THERE'S NO WAY TO DETONATE IT AND STILL MAKE A QUICK GETAWAY, FOXX--!
--TSK, TSK! TOO BAD!!
HOOM... THOOM...

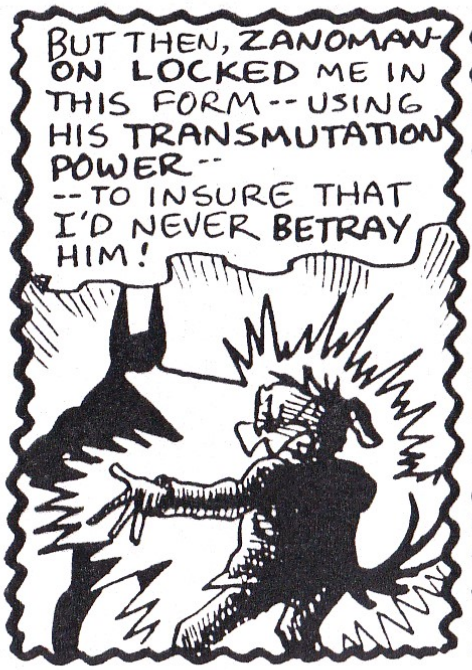

--AND THERE'S NO WAY TO GET NEAR THE MACHINE WITHOUT GETTING FRIED--
--ELECTRICAL FORCE FIELD, DON'T YOU KNOW--!
--WHY DO YOU THINK ZANOMANON NEEDS NO GUARDS HERE--?!
THOOM... THOOM... THOOM... THOOM...


—I SEE HE HASN'T CHANGED YOU BACK TO YOUR TRUE FORM YET!
ALAS, NO! --FRANKLY, I JUST GOT HERE--!
--I HAD TO WALK HERE ALL THE WAY FROM THE AREA WHERE THOSE PRIMITIVES HAD CAPTURED US--
--AN EXHAUSTING STROLL, BELIEVE ME!
—BUT YES, I WILL BE OVERJOYED WHEN THE MASTER'S TASK OF DESTROYING THE AGHARTAN'S IS CONCLUDED AND HE HAS TIME TO RESTORE ME--
THOOM... THOOM... THOOM... THOOM...


THIS... RIDICULOUS GUISE...WAS USEFUL -- BUT ITS PURPOSE HAS BEEN SERVED -- -- IT WILL BE A RELIEF TO DISCARD IT...
ONE THING I DON'T UNDERSTAND, "SCOTTY"...
HOOM... THOOM
IF YOU AREN'T PROF. SCOTTY, --WHAT DID HAPPEN TO THE REAL ONE?
HEH, HEH... REMEMBER THAT BODY WE DISCOVERED IN THE HIMALAYAS...?
THOOM... THOOM


THAT WAS PROF. OLIVER S. SCOTTY! ZANOMANON HIMSELF FLEW WITH ME TO INTERCEPT THE PROFESSOR AS HE ENTERED THE HIMALAYAN DOORWAY TO THE HOLLOW EARTH -- MENDEL HAD TOLD THE MASTER OF THIS..

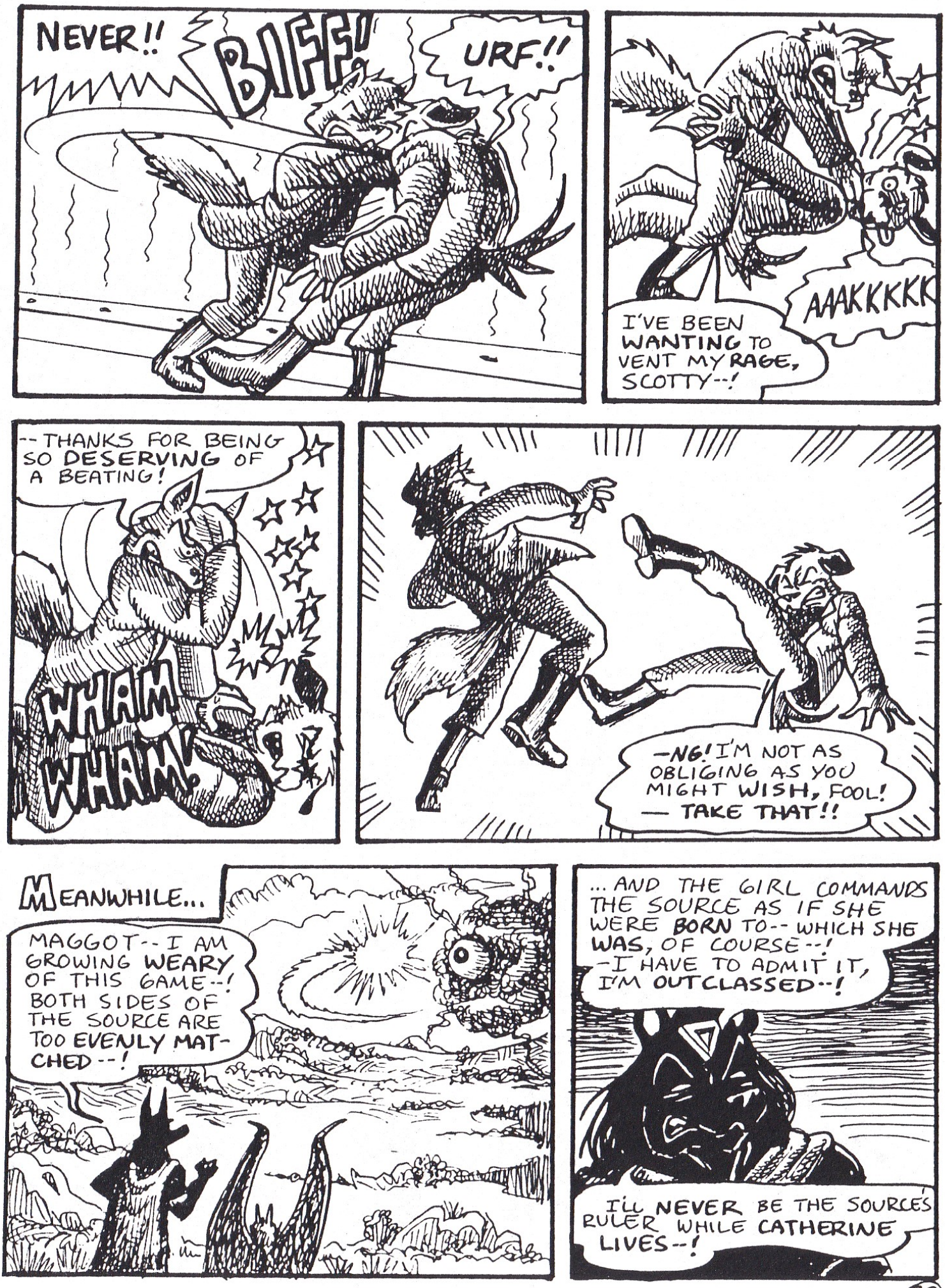

ANYWAY... INSTEAD OF DISCOVERING AN ARCHEOLOGIST'S DREAM... --HE DISCOVERED HIS DEATH!
-- BUT FIRST -- I MADE CONTACT WITH HIM, ACQUIRING NOT ONLY HIS FORM BUT HIS MEMORIES AND MANNERISMS AS WELL!

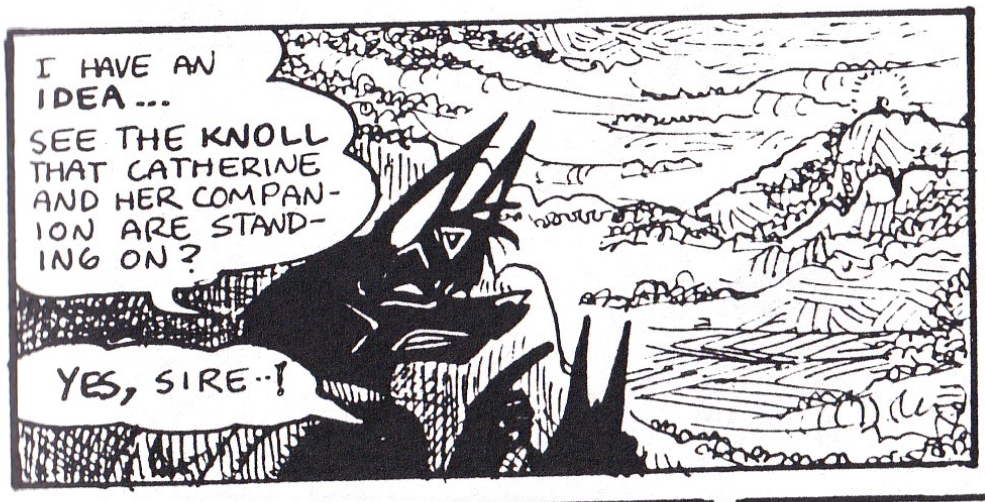

BUT THEN, ZANOMANON LOCKED ME IN THIS FORM -- USING HIS TRANSMUTATION POWER -- -- TO INSURE THAT I'D NEVER BETRAY HIM!

--THUS, I MADE A VERY CONVINCING PROFESSOR SCOTTY...

--NOT THAT YOU NEEDED MUCH CONVINCING -- ESPECIALLY AFTER I SHOWED YOU THE CRYSTAL THE MASTER GAVE ME...
THOOM... THOOM

--BUT SOME OF THE THINGS YOU TOLD ME--LIKE THE DESTRUCTION OF THE GATEWAY--AND YOU SEEMED NOT TO KNOW ABOUT THE GUARDIANS--
HA! NO! THEY HADN'T BOTHERED MY FIRST VISIT--AND WHEN I CAME THROUGH AGAIN WITH YOU I WAS GENUINELY SURPRISED WHEN THEY ATTACKED--
THOOM... THOOM... T
--CAUGHT UP IN THE ADVENTURE, AS IT WERE--!
--AND YES, I FOOLISHLY EMBELLISHED MY STORY OF PROF. SCOTTY'S DISCOVERY OF THE DOORWAY--
--AND YOU CAUGHT ME IN THE LIE ONCE WE WERE THERE--BUT BY THEN IT WAS TOO LATE--!
--BUT WE ALL MAKE MISTAKES, DON'T WE, FOXX--?
--YOURS...
OOM... THOOM... T
--WAS A BLIND OBSESSION WITH A FOOLISH FEMALE--
UFF!!
WHACK!
THOOM... THOOM
GASP!
FZZZZ!
THOOM... THOOM... T
--DON'T GET YOUR HOPES UP, FOXX--ALL I HAVE TO DO IS KEEP YOU HERE UNTIL THE MASTER RETURNS!
THOOM... TH
NOTHING CAN SAVE YOU FROM ZONOMANON'S WRATH--
YOU WILL DIE--AND YOUR BELOVED MARIANA WILL SERVE ZANOMANON--
DOM... THOO
FOREVER--!!
HAHAHAHAHAHA!
THOOM...


NEVER!!
BIFF!
URF!!
AAAKKKK
I'VE BEEN WANTING TO VENT MY RAGE, SCOTTY--!
--THANKS FOR BEING SO DESERVING OF A BEATING!
WHAM WHAM!
-NG! I'M NOT AS OBLIGING AS YOU MIGHT WISH, FOOL! — TAKE THAT!!
MEANWHILE...
MAGGOT--I AM GROWING WEARY OF THIS GAME--! BOTH SIDES OF THE SOURCE ARE TOO EVENLY MATCHED--!
...AND THE GIRL COMMANDS THE SOURCE AS IF SHE WERE BORN TO--WHICH SHE WAS, OF COURSE--! -I HAVE TO ADMIT IT, I'M OUTCLASSED--!
I'LL NEVER BE THE SOURCE'S RULER WHILE CATHERINE LIVES--!


I HAVE AN IDEA...
SEE THE KNOLL THAT CATHERINE AND HER COMPANION ARE STANDING ON?
YES, SIRE--!

FLY OVER BEHIND THEM, MAGGOT-- SNEAK UP ON THEM-- I WILL DISTRACT THEM--

...AND THEN YOU CAN ATTACK THE GIRL FROM BEHIND--! --DID YOU BRING A WEAPON?
N-NO, SIRE-- I DIDN'T THINK I'D NEED ONE--!

YOU HAVE NOTHING?!
W-WELL, I HAVE A TRANQUI-DART-- I PLANNED TO USE IT ON MYSELF WHEN THE STRESS GOT TO BE TOO MUCH FOR ME--
HMM-- NOT VERY LETHAL... BUT IT'LL HAVE TO DO...

-TAKE THE DART AND HIT CATHERINE WITH IT-- ITS DOSAGE WILL RENDER HER USELESS-!
Y-YOU WANT ME TO DO THIS ALL BY MYSELF--?

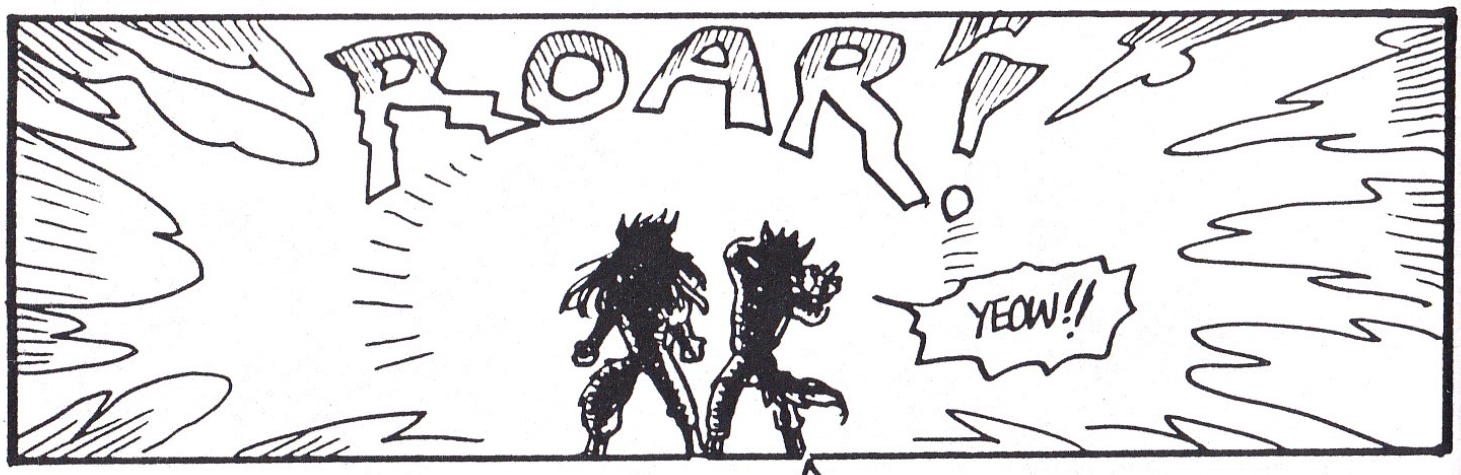
-WHAT'S WRONG?
--WELL BESIDES THE SOURCE, SHE'S GOT THAT SCARY WALTER KITTY WITH HER-

--I MEAN, WHO WANTS TO TANGLE WITH A GUY WHO CAN IGNORE YOUR POWER LIKE HE DID--!?
WELL, LET ME PUT IT THIS WAY, MAGGOT--

-YOU CAN EITHER FACE HIM-- ...OR ME

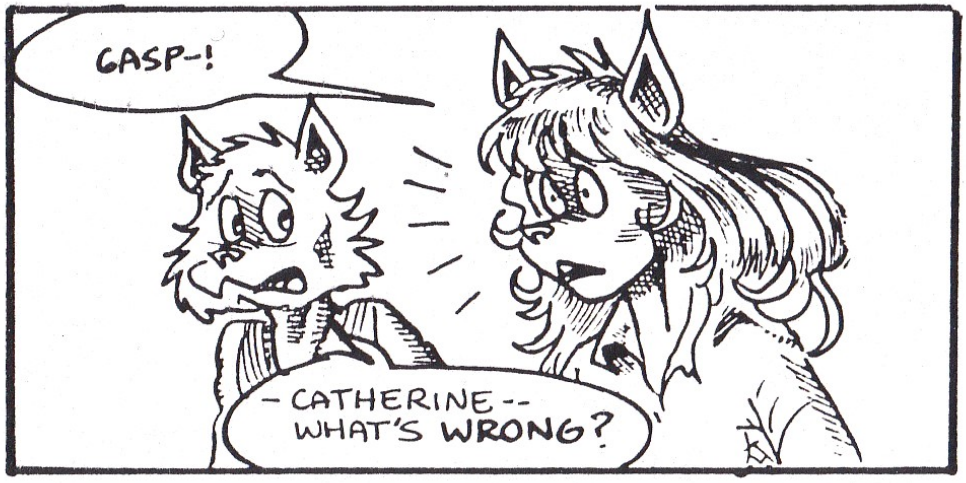
BOY! THE THINGS A GUY HAS TO DO TO PROVE HIS LOYALTY--!
FLAP! FLAP!

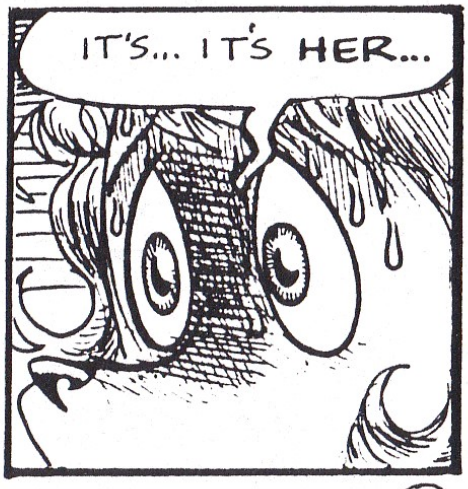
-THIS IS NERVE-WRACKING--! HOW LONG CAN YOU KEEP THIS UP--?
SHH! SOMETHING'S UP, WALTER- IT'S TOO QUIET-- I MUST BE PREPARED FOR ANYTHING!

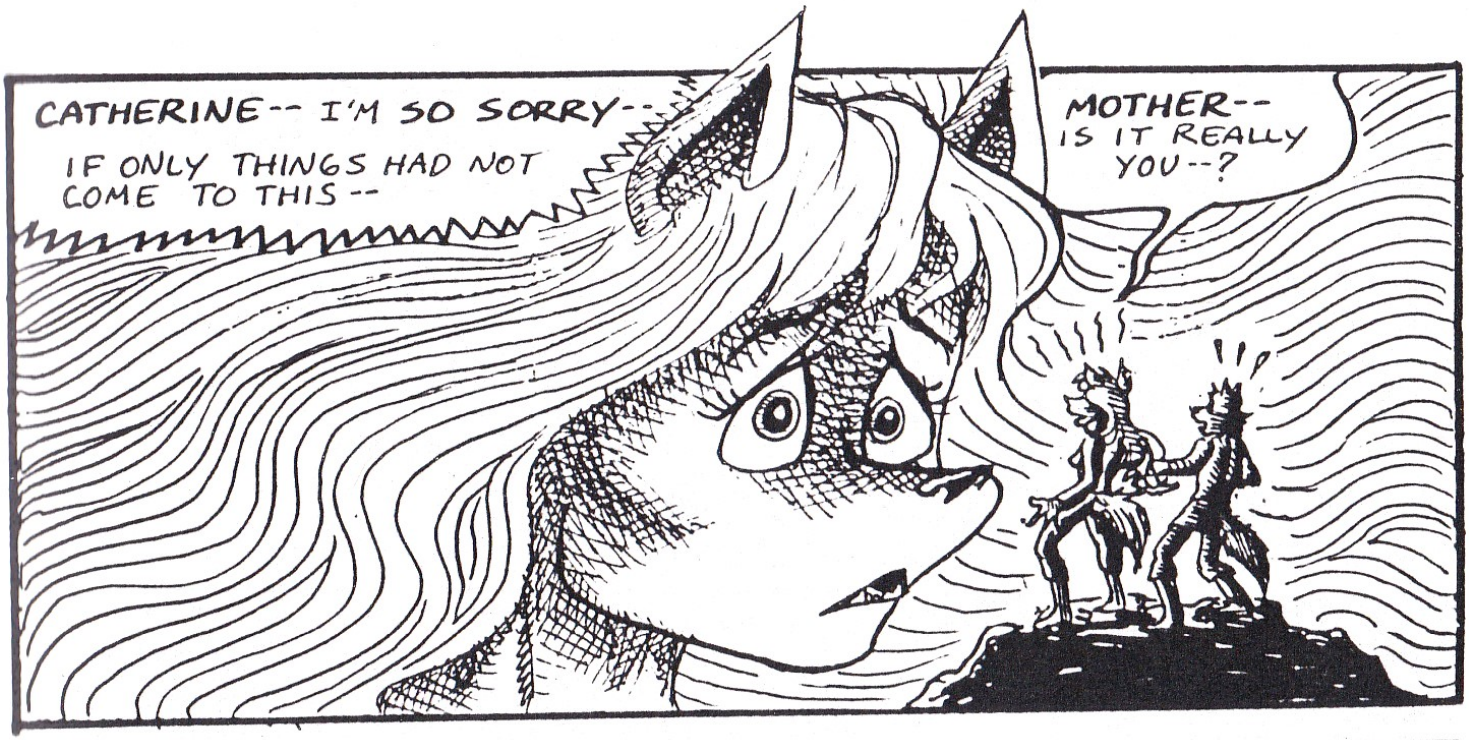

ROAR!
YEOW!!

WHAT DID I TELL YOU? ZANOMANON IS SO PREDICTABLE! HIS ATTACKS ARE SO TRANSPARENT!
--BUT I SEEM TO BE ADJUSTING TO CONTROLLING THE SOURCE WITH EASE -- IT SEEMS SO NATURAL TO ME--

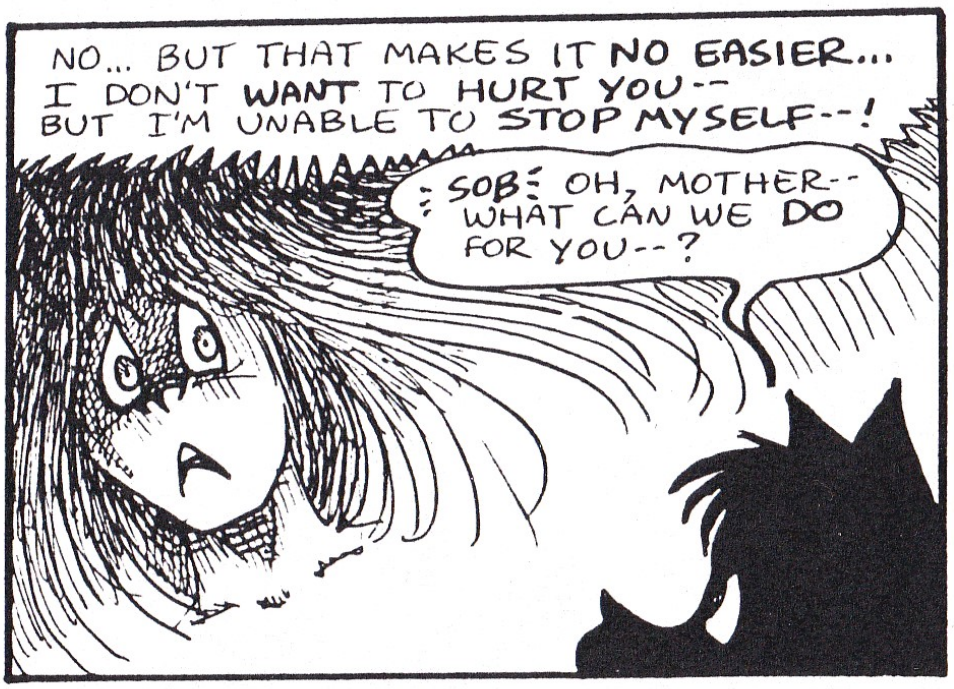
PERHAPS I WAS BORN TO THIS POWER...
PERHAPS I AM MORE MY MOTHER'S DAUGHTER THAN I THOUGHT...

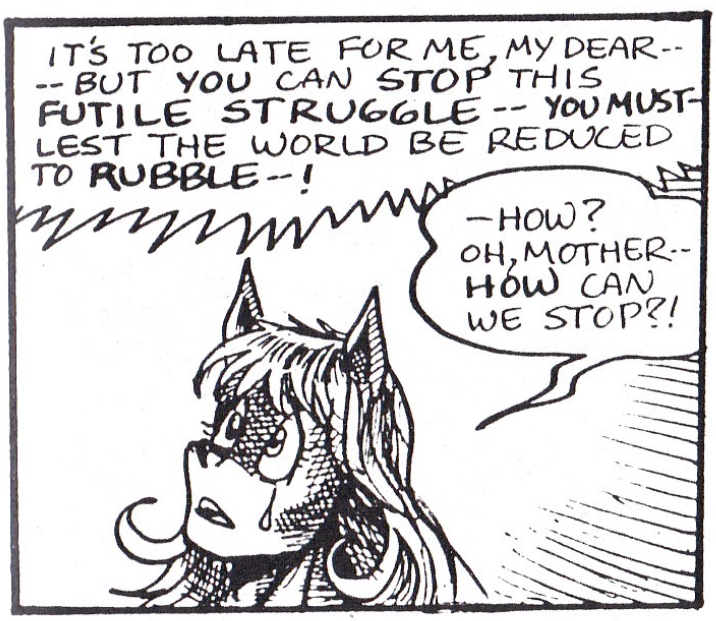

GASP-!
-CATHERINE-- WHAT'S WRONG?

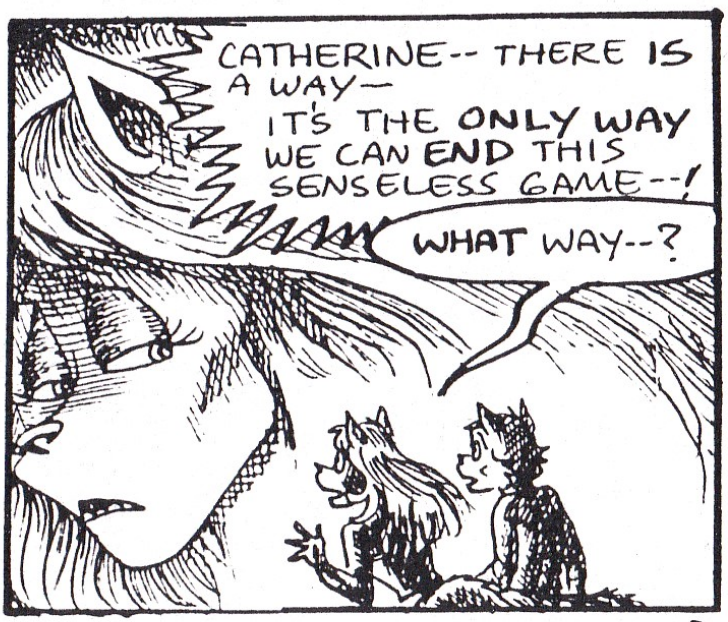

IT'S... IT'S HER...

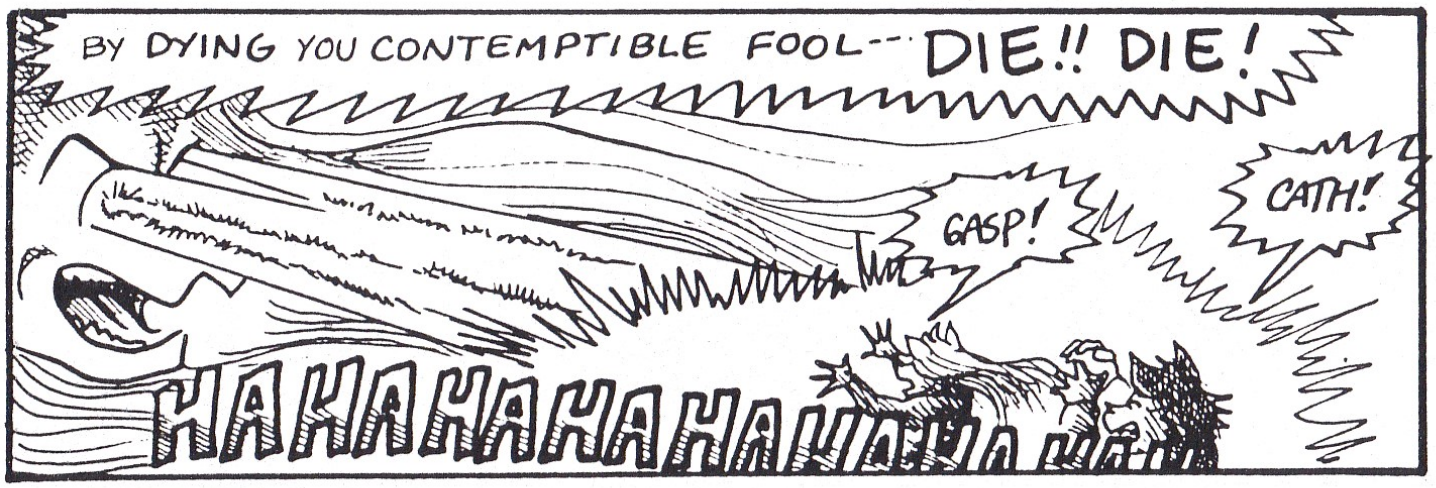

CATHERINE-- I'M SO SORRY--
IF ONLY THINGS HAD NOT COME TO THIS --
MOTHER-- IS IT REALLY YOU--?

AFTER ALL THE YEARS WE'VE BEEN APART-- I GRIEVE THAT WE SHOULD BE REUNITED UNDER SUCH HORRIBLE CIRCUMSTANCES--
DARLING-- PLEASE DON'T HATE ME--!
I DON'T HATE YOU--! I COULD NEVER HATE YOU!! SOB: I KNOW YOU CAN'T HELP WHAT'S HAPPENING!

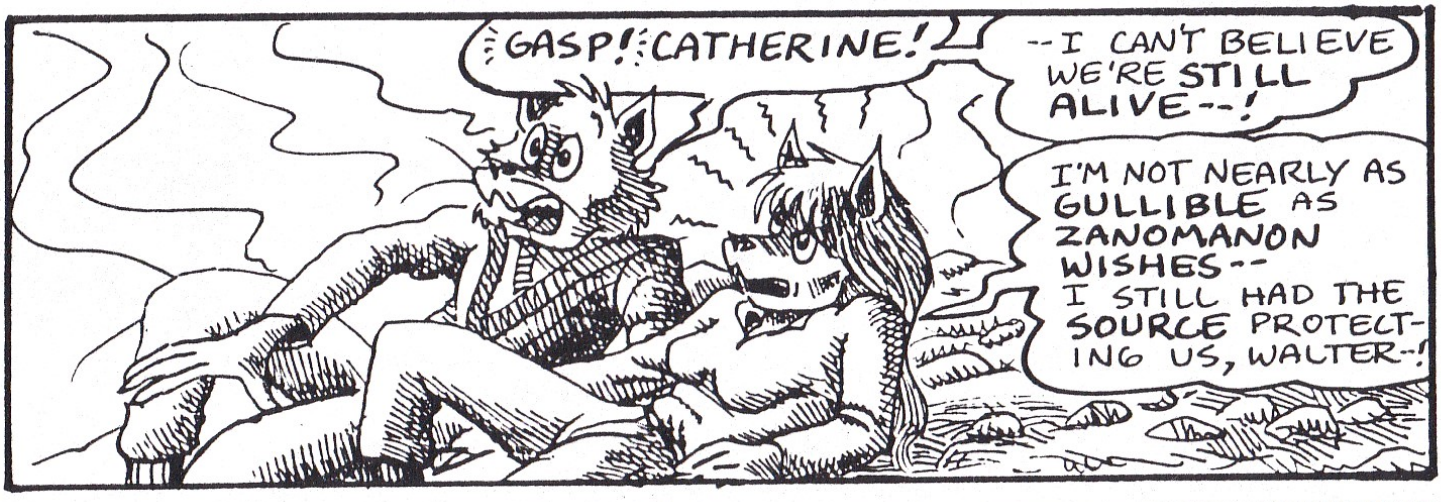

NO... BUT THAT MAKES IT NO EASIER... I DON'T WANT TO HURT YOU-- BUT I'M UNABLE TO STOP MYSELF--!
SOB: OH, MOTHER-- WHAT CAN WE DO FOR YOU--?

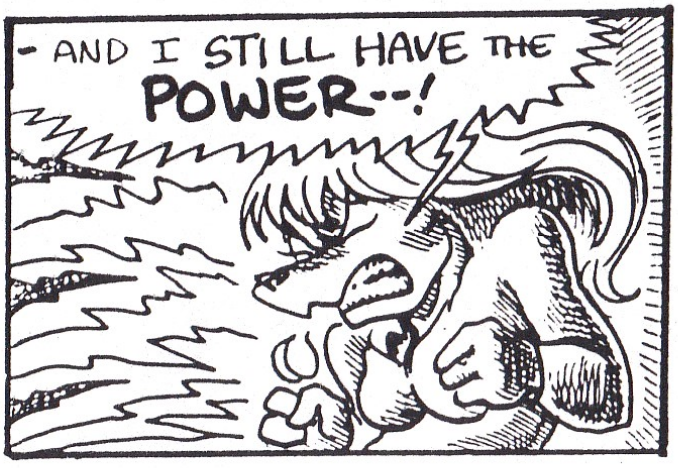

IT'S TOO LATE FOR ME, MY DEAR-- --BUT YOU CAN STOP THIS FUTILE STRUGGLE -- YOU MUST- LEST THE WORLD BE REDUCED TO RUBBLE--!
-HOW? OH, MOTHER-- HOW CAN WE STOP?!


CATHERINE-- THERE IS A WAY-- IT'S THE ONLY WAY WE CAN END THIS SENSELESS GAME--!
WHAT WAY--?

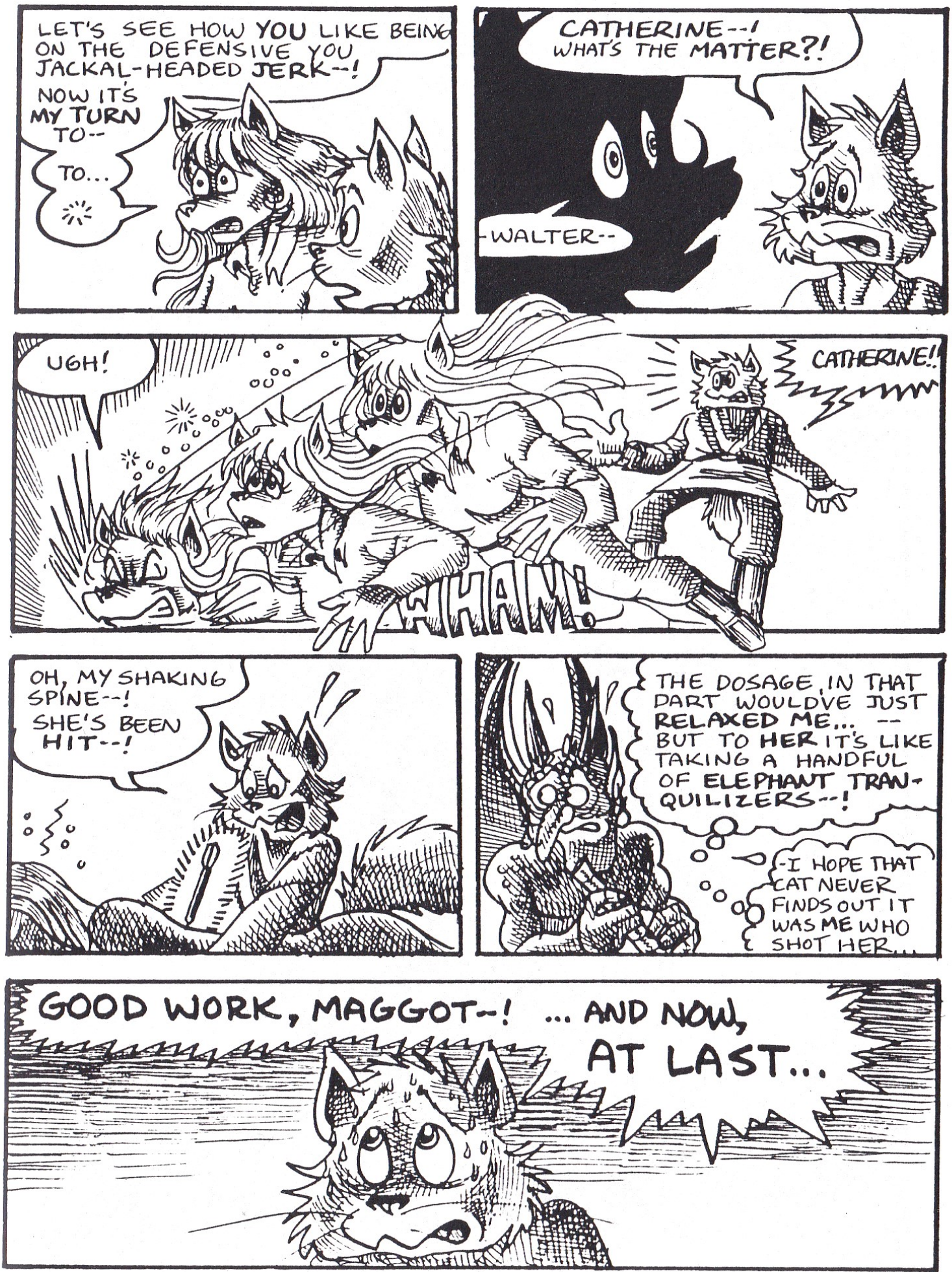

BY DYING YOU CONTEMPTIBLE FOOL--- DIE!! DIE!
GASP!
CATH!
HAHAHAHAHAHAHA

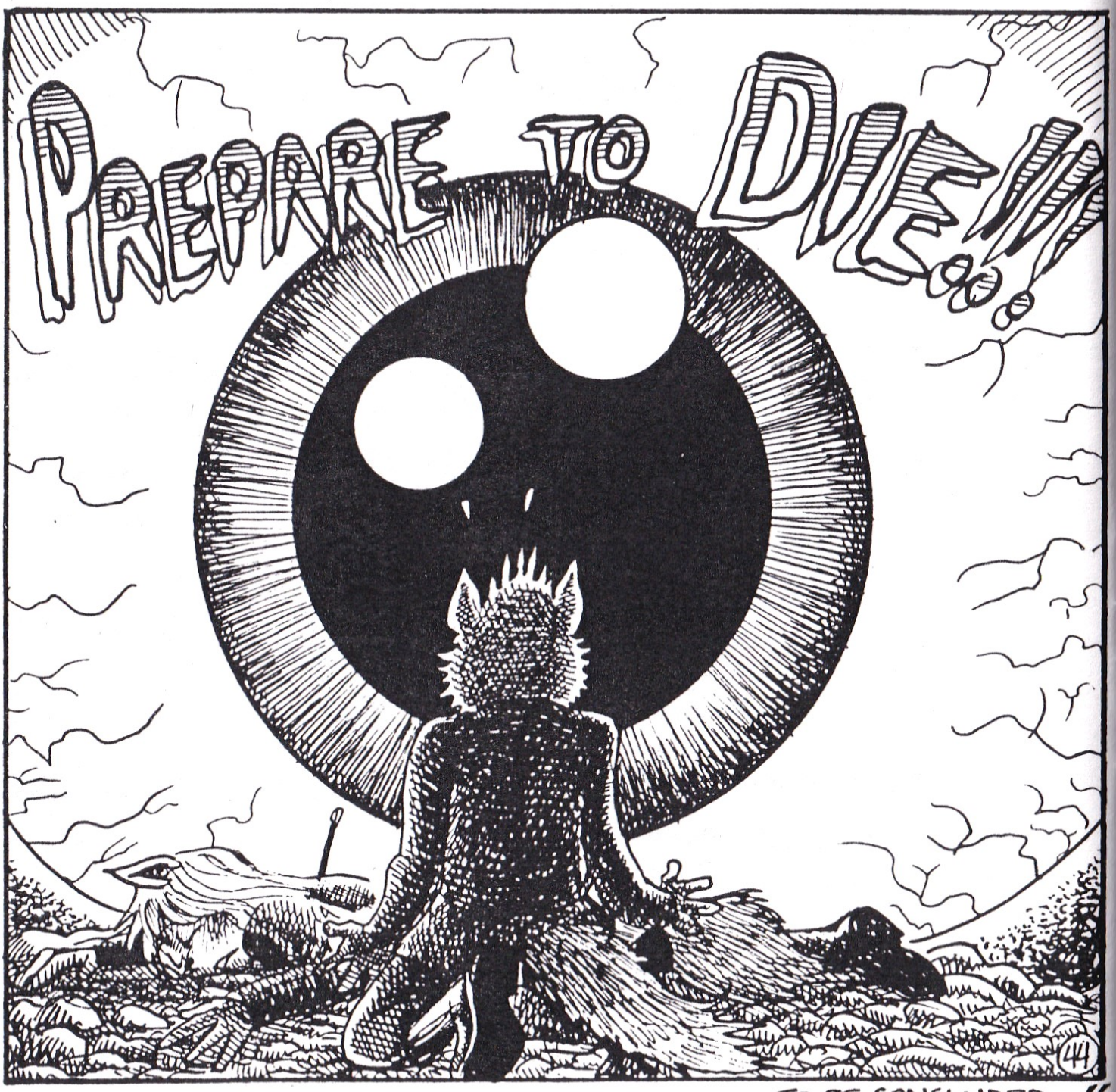
HA HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAH


GASP! CATHERINE!
--I CAN'T BELIEVE WE'RE STILL ALIVE--!
I'M NOT NEARLY AS GULLIBLE AS ZANOMANON WISHES-- I STILL HAD THE SOURCE PROTECTING US, WALTER--!


-AND I STILL HAVE THE POWER--!

RIGHT BACK AT YOU, ZANOMANON--!!
EEYOW!!
SHOOSH!!


LET'S SEE HOW YOU LIKE BEING ON THE DEFENSIVE YOU JACKAL-HEADED JERK--!
NOW IT'S MY TURN TO--
TO...
CATHERINE--! WHAT'S THE MATTER?!
-WALTER--
UGH!
CATHERINE!!
WHAM!
OH, MY SHAKING SPINE--! SHE'S BEEN HIT--!
THE DOSAGE IN THAT DART WOULD'VE JUST RELAXED ME... -- BUT TO HER IT'S LIKE TAKING A HANDFUL OF ELEPHANT TRANQUILIZERS--!
-I HOPE THAT CAT NEVER FINDS OUT IT WAS ME WHO SHOT HER...
GOOD WORK, MAGGOT--! ... AND NOW, AT LAST...



—— TO BE CONCLUDED--!!

Dear Mark;

Walter Kitty #14 looks great! If professional paperbacks can have lopsided cover registration, why can't you? The story is the main thing, and that's still excellent.

I was surprised by Mariana's death. I was guessing that Prof. Scotty would be the one to go, since he was a villain and his demise would almost be worth celebrating. It would also have been more suitable for the lighter mood that the serial began with. It's evolved into a much more somber and richer work, to its credit. (To your credit, I should say.)

By the way, is the evil Prof. Scotty a "genuinely" phony character or an imposter? As I recall, Prof. Scotty was revealed in issue # 10 (Parts 6 & 7) to be a transformed Boot or some other creation of Zanomanon who was sent to lure Dr. Foxx and Catherine into the hollow Earth. But when Prof Scotty was introduced in Part 2, the dialog stated that he was a famous archaeologist who was already well-known by reputation to Dr. Foxx. This made me wonder whether "our" Scotty was impersonating a "real" Prof. Scotty who doesn't come into the story at all, or whether he was Zanomanon's creature all along who had spent years building up his cover identity. This point is so minor that it doesn't affect the story at all, of course, but I don't recall it being covered in #10, and for some reason I can't stop wondering about it.

ROWRBRAZZLE is technically not my own zine. It's the publication of a club of funny-animal fan artists & writers, and it consists of their individual zines. I'm the current editor. 'BRAZZLE will celebrate its 10th anniversary next year. It currently has a full membership and a waiting list that's literally years long. I'm tempted to try to recruit you-- but I don't want to distract you from WALTER KITTY.

Fannishly,

Fred Patten
Culver City, Ca

Thanks, Fred— I guess the events of this issue answer your questions about Prof. Scotty— but what about all those poor readers who are just now coming aboard and wondering..."?! Who the devil is Prof. Scotty?!" Ah, well...

Dear Mark,

I'm not sure how to comment on WALTER KITTY, since I've obviously missed a lot of the Hollow Earth story, and have apparently walked in on the least lighthearted part. Even so, it makes me sorry that I never got to see the earlier installments. I'm already concerned about the characters, and wondering how it's all going to turn out... hoping for a reasonably happy ending, but not at all sure that it can be pulled off.

Another reason I regret not seeing the earlier installments is the indication, in these two chapters I have seen, that you drop hints on the eventual outcome of the plot. The evil source's ego trip, for instance, has started a little niggling thought in my mind that it might be a very unwise idea for anyone, even another utterly evil being, to try to control it.

Let me know, will you, when the next WALTER KITTY issues are coming out?

Sincerely,

Michael Susko, Jr.
San Francisco, CA

You bet I will, Michael— so tell me— what do you think of <u>this</u> issue?

As for hoping for a reasonably happy ending, don't hope too hard... I never promised to deliver one! Hmm... would one consider the Earth exploding to be a happy or unhappy ending—? I guess it would depend on your point of view—!

Dear Unca Mark:

Thank you for (W.K.) #14... and for printing my letter in it. I was surprised you didn't include in your printed reply the point you made in a letter to me, about Catherine's inherent unwillingness to summon the evil side of the Source. It clarified a couple of plot points for me in a way the printed reply would not have. Well, perhaps most of your readership has been with you longer than I have and doesn't need the help.

My favorite part of #14 was the confrontation with Zanomanon, both on the cover (nice work) and

in the story. Walter had just been acted on in the couple of episodes I'd seen; now he takes action himself, and carries it off well. I take it that if he'd tried to use that sword on Zanomanon it would have just bounced off? The death of Mariana was also well done.

Other matters: a much improved splash page that certainly makes one want to see the whole story. Thanks for the less-reduced version. I'm happy to hear of the upcoming WALTER KITTY of the SSCPPA. Looks like it's August.

Always carry a grapefruit,

Philip M. Cohen
White Plains, NY

Actually W.K. of the SSCPPA was pushed back to November of '93, and the second chapter was just published in FURRLOUGH #12 which should be on the stands in January. Part three (the conclusion) should appear in FURRLOUGH # 14, sometime in March.

And no, Walter could very well have killed Zanomanon with that sword— but he had so much on his mind, trying to rescue Catherine and all, that he didn't even consider it! Too bad, huh?!

Dear "Uncle" Mark,

I enjoyed WALTER KITTY #14--the story is building to its obviously ultimate climax, and elements as diverse as Walter's heroic rescue of Catherine and Mariana's death dovetail nicely to form a counterpoint to each other. Though "The Hollow Earth" is a funny animal comic, its plot is shaded by darker and more profound issues than one expects to find in a work such as this. Somehow, because the characters are cute and cartoony animal-people, it gives the serious aspects of the story much more weight than they would have had with "human" characters. It works very well. Mariana's death came as a shock to me--even after all your hints and warnings. That her soul should be forced to "live" in order to supply Zanomanon with the power to control the Source, is, upon contemplation, a horror that outweighs the "horror" of her death.

Though this is Walter's comic, Dr. Foxx is actually the focal character--**his** view of life is the one going through changes, and it's **his** life that is most disrupted by Zanomanon's deed. His unbelieving state of mind is pure denial in the face of what he's seen and encountered with his own eyes since the story began. He is definitely going through changes. It is Dr. Foxx's ordeal that gives "T.H.E." its emotional weight, and it has a definite impact.

And now that I've praised you to the skies, here's the down side. I'd like to take you to task on a purely technical level. My biggest complaint with "T.H.E." has nothing to do with the story or writing--but in the artwork. Over the past 10 chapters, I've seen a steady progression in your art style--from an extremely simple (or crude) technique--to a much higher level of sophistication-- but that level doesn't remain consistent. The most noticeable example of this is in the faces of your female characters, especially Catherine. It's almost as if you're having to relearn how to draw her each time she appears, because she looks different from issue to issue. Also, it is obvious when you tire of a particular panel or scene, because those look rushed and unfinished. Examples in part 10 are the sequence where Catherine and Dennis are talking on page 37, and her reunion with her father on the following pages. More effort should be made to make her artistically consistent.

Another thing that bothered me; Zanomanon's Transit-sphere being a blatent copy of "the sphere" from the Ray Harryhausen film "First Men In The Moon" --and a rather hastily sketched one at that. If Zanomanon had a time machine, would it look like the one from the George Pal film? **(--Of course!--U.M.)**

Artistic quibbling aside (and I am quibbling), I like your comic quite a lot--story and art-- otherwise, I wouldn't bother to write and tell you all this.

I love funny animals-- but funny animals in a cracking good story that manages to be exciting, funny and sad-- well, that's a rare and precious thing!

Sincerely,

Gordon Linanski
Cincinnati, OH

In life we must face the bitter with the sweet. I am all too aware of my weaknesses in drawing my female characters— I really struggle with them— and yes, drawing Catherine in Part 10 was a relearning experience for me, as she's been mostly unconscious for the last five issues, and out of the picture. My drawing style has changed over the course of "T.H.E.'s" genesis, from broadly cartoonish, to a more complex crosshatching style, and now, to a more conscious effort of trying to balance the two.

Drawing has always been a kind of instinctive thing with me, but inking is a technical skill that I've never quite mastered. The consequence is that

my artwork has a rough, untidy look to it, no matter how polished I attempt to make it. You have to realize, too, that on a long, self published project such as this, one comes to feel rather isolated, and since the response to each issue comes so long after I actually worked on it, feedback such as this, though helpful, comes way too late to affect that particular issue. I also tend to forget that I'm trying to communicate to an audience, and sometimes I just get lazy and let sloppy art slip by. Believe me, I cringe looking at some of those earlier issues.

And this is no excuse either, but sometimes I get into a mood where I feel really stupid and impractical putting so much time and effort into what is essentially an unpaid labor of love— so I tend to try and justify that impracticality by attempting experiments with it—like trying out different inking techniques. Sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't, but at least I feel like I'm learning something new while still cranking out the story. At the very least, the constant practice in inking that "T.H.E." has provided me has made me a much better artist on other more commercial projects that have paid off financially for me.

Rest assured that I'm fully aware of my limitations as an artist. In a perfect world, I would devote most of my time to writing— and let another, better artist handle the art (though I'd probably still want to do the rough pencils and characters' expressions!). The bottom line is that I'm not a very good inker. If you saw the original pages for "T.H.E.", you'd most likely be amazed at the amount of white-out and paste-ups I have to utilize to make them look even this good! My consolation is, that when I began this project, I doubted my ability to make it look as good as it does— so, even with all the mistakes and inconsistencies, I'm happy that I've even gotten this far.

As for Zanomanon's Transit-sphere, I made it to look like the one in "First Men In The Moon" because A.) I love that movie , B.) I'd just met Harryhausen at a Dallas convention, so it was on my mind, and C.) That sequence was so confoundedly dull to draw that I grasped at anything that would make it more interesting.

Strange and bizarre are the workings of the mind of Uncle Mark.

And as usual, my answer to a letter is as long or longer than the letter itself! Geez! I really do like to write, don't I?!

Dear Mark,

You fiend! You creep!! What murderous impulse drove you to wantonly murder poor Mariana?! Now Dr. Foxx'll **never** get any-- the poor slob! And what about Walter? Since when does Walter have the guts to stand up to a nasty monster like Zanomanon? It's like your characters are changing personalities or something--! What's next-- Dennis taking a bludgeon and dashing Catherine's brains out? Come to think of it-- that might actually sell a few issues... Hey! I've got it! Why not kill **everyone** off, Walter included? Instant collectible Death of Walter Kitty issue!

So what did you think of THE NIGHTMARE BEFORE CHRISTMAS--? As if I needed to ask.

Clark Duncan
Garland, TX

THIS IS HALLOWEEN! THIS IS HALLOWEEN! PUMPKINS SCREAM IN THE DEAD OF NIGHT! SKELETON JACK MIGHT CATCH YOU IN THE BACK, MAKE YOU SCREAM LIKE A BANSHEE, MAKE YOU JUMP OUT OF YOUR SKIN!! Yeah! I liked it A LOT!!! The Elf man has never been better—musically, it's a work of genius—and the animation was good too!

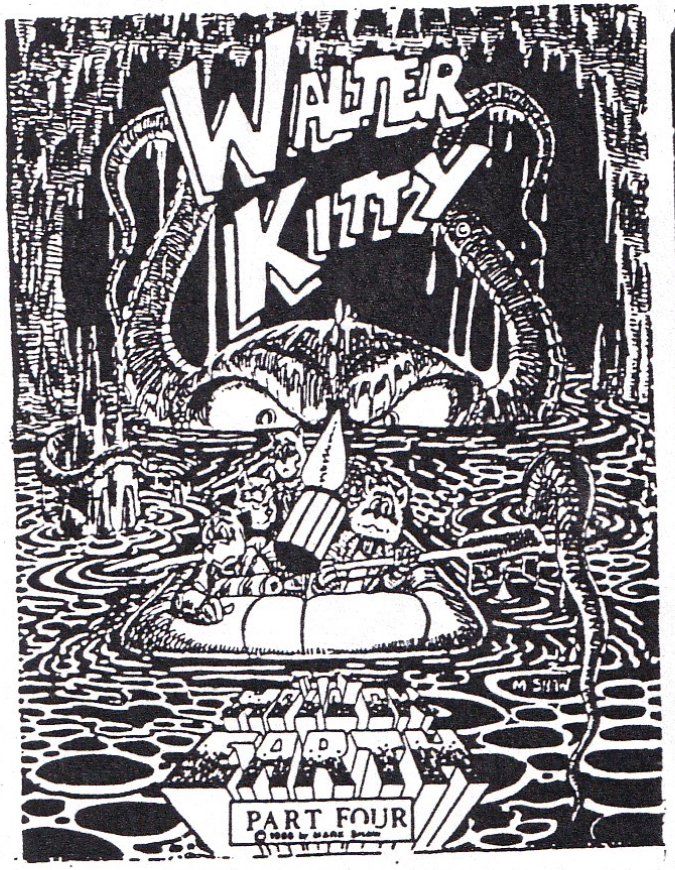
That's it for this time, boys and girls— Join us next issue for the rock-em, sock-em, rip-roaring CONCLUSION of THE HOLLOW EARTH!! I promise a few surprises are in store for you— some delightful, some dreadful!!

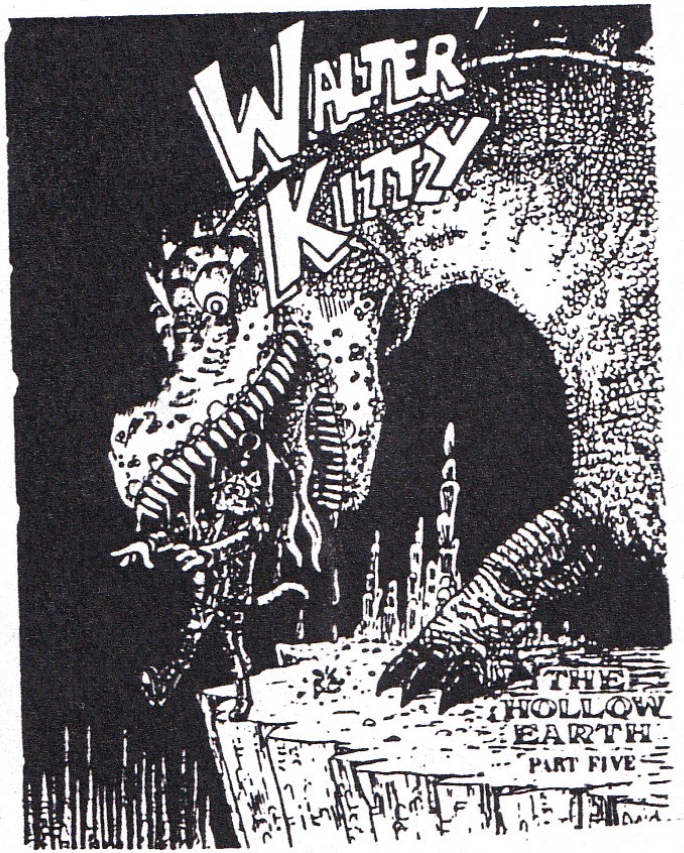
In the meantime, —WRITE US!!!

AWK PROJECTS
2701 Penny Lane # 219
Austin, Texas 78757

"HOLLOW EARTH" COVER GALLERY

Since "The Hollow Earth" wraps up next issue, I thought it would be appropriate to reprint the covers of the first few chapters of the story-- (OK! OK! It's just an easy way to fill up these inevitable blank pages) Enjoy!





This illustration was done to promote **WALTER KITTY OF THE SSCPPA...** a three-part story currently appearing in Antarctic Press' **FURRLOUGH...** As far as I know, Antarctic never used it, so I'm printing it here to plug that story. **BUY YOURS TODAY !!!**

NEXT ISSUE:

In Part Twelve of **"THE HOLLOW EARTH"**-- the adventure **concludes**-- with a hair-raising **fight to the finish**--!

--**Catherine** lies near **death**--!

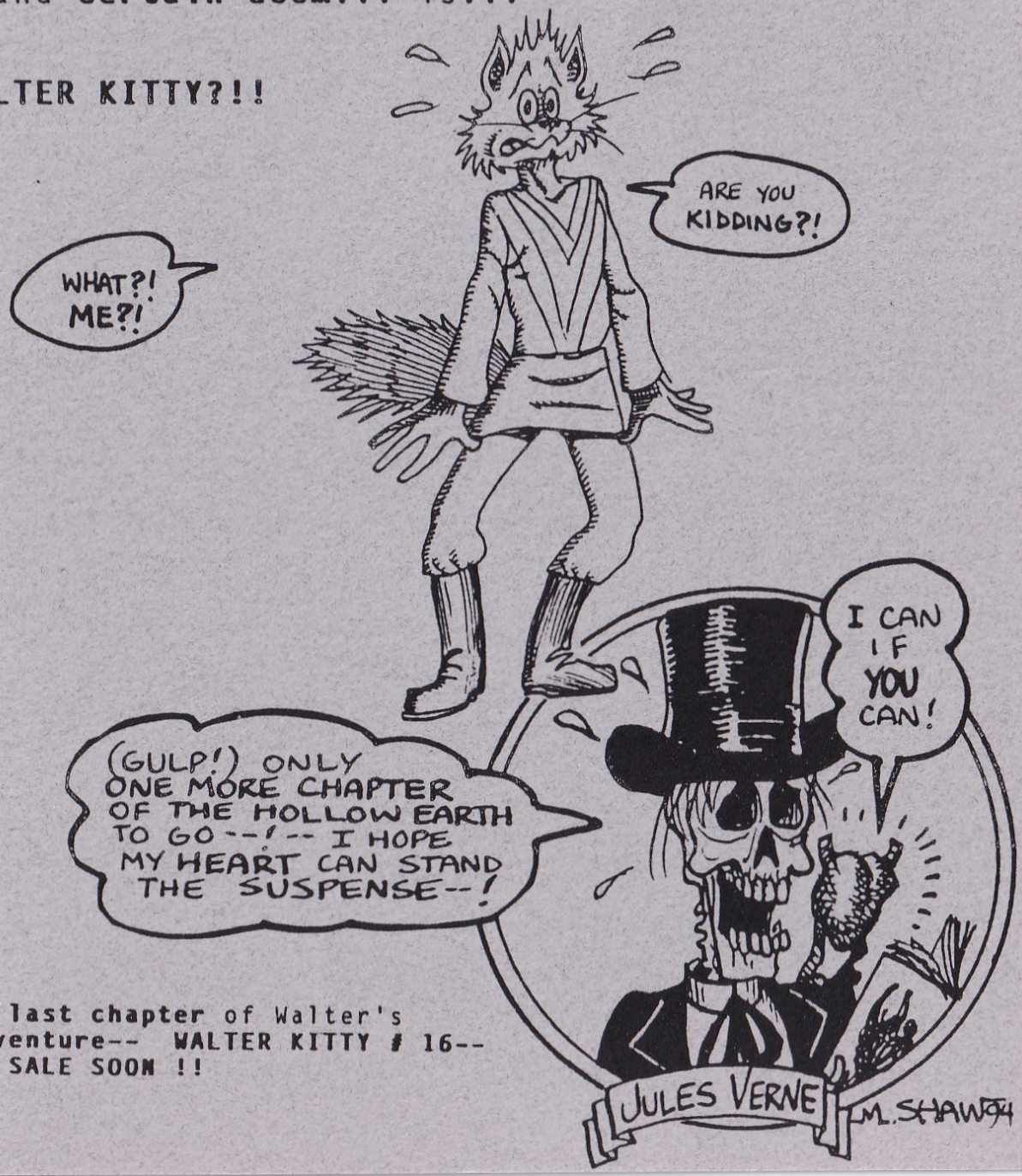
--**Zanomanon** becomes **sole master** of **the Source**--!

--**Dr. Foxx** battles the **bogus Prof. Scotty**--!

--**Dennis** struggles with a **deadly delimma**--!

--And the only thing that stands between them all and **certain doom**... is...

--**WALTER KITTY?!!**



Don't miss the **last chapter** of Walter's **underground adventure**-- **WALTER KITTY # 16**-- **ON SALE SOON !!**

M.SHAW '92